Marjorie's Quest

BY

Jeanie T Gould

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"LIFTING THE CHILD IN HIS ARMS"

MARJORIE'S QUEST.

BY

JEANIE T. GOULD,

AUTHOR OF "A CHAPLET OF LEAVES."

"One loving houre
For many yeares of sorrow can dispense."

SPENSER.

IN 1898

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY AUGUSTUS HOPPIN.

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To

MY MOTHER,

BUT FOR WHOSE KINDLY INTEREST AND ENCOURAGEMENT THIS STORY WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN WRITTEN, FOUNDED AS IT IS UPON AN ACT OF UNOBTRUSIVE BENEVOLENCE IN ONE WHOM WE BOTH LOVED AND HONORED, THIS BOOK IS VERY LOVINGLY

DEDICATED.

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MARJORIE'S QUEST.

CHAPTER I.

THE WHEEL BEGINS TO TURN.

IT was a bitter cold morning. The snow, which had been falling heavily all night, lay in great drifts on the eaves of the houses, and almost covered the fences, while the cutting north wind brought a sort of hail with it that made one shiver. Everybody in the little village of Wynn seemed cautious of venturing forth; the very houses looked sleepy and cold in the semi-darkness of half-past seven o'clock on a December morning. The low wooden tavern, with its yellow doors and green blinds, seemed to be the only place where any life was stirring, and even that was confined to a small group of three people, standing huddled together in a corner of the piazza which was most sheltered from the wind and hail.

"Arrah, but I'm thinking it'll be late, the day, whin the stage gits here," said one of the three, addressing a gaunt-looking man who was endeavoring to scrape the snow away from the door.

"I canna say, Barney," replied the other, cautiously, tugging at his red worsted comforter as the hail whistled sharply against the back of his neck. "I canna say. If Mr. Hall left Clifton at the usual hour, he'll be here soon. Is the bairn going far?"

"The child, is it?" asked Barney, who, notwithstand-

ing his some years' acquaintance with his Scotch friend, invariably translated his peculiar idiom into good, broad Irish brogue; "sure, she 's going to Saybrooke, to Darby McKeon's brother's. Did'nt yees know that Darby died yesterday (God rest his soul!) and Judy, — wirra! I hope yer purty little hand 's got over the hit she give ye wid her dirthy slipper? eh, Margie, darlint?"

The third member of the group, a child of about ten years, raised her little face, and shook her head with a bit of a smile, at Barney's question.

"O! then that 's the bairn you were telling me of, that" —

"Yis," said Barney, interrupting him, suddenly. "Ye see, Sandy, there 's sorra a bit use in spaking *all* that you know, and," lowering his voice, and pointing over his shoulder at the child with a jerk of his big thumb, "it 's mighty quare and old she is fur her years, and sure, it would only onsettle her, perhaps, if I tould her — what you know."

"I ken," said Sandy, nodding his head gravely, at this mysterious remark. "Weel, my wee lassie, d'ye likit to gang awa' to Saybrooke?"

"Judy beats me," said the child, briefly.

Sandy paused in his task, and eyed her curiously for a second, but she did not appear to notice his scrutiny, except that the small, cold fingers clung to Barney a little tighter.

"Aye," said the Scotchman, "yon 's an old head on young shoulders, as you say, Barney. But how came you to send her to Saybrooke and intil some o' the same brood o' McKeon's?"

"Whist, Sandy; there 's no need av going over the matter jist now. Don't ye, Margie!" seeing a tear fall from

the child's downcast eyelids; "sure, I'll be over wid the fiddle betune now and Sunday week, and we'll have an Irish breakdown, maybe, all till our two selves. Faix, Sandy, there comes the stage up the hill this very minute."

Barney was right; that black, crawling object was really the stage, but it took some moments for the four horses to toil through the unbroken drifts to the summit of the hill, and he employed the time in telling Margie a funny Irish story about a "little red fox." It was usually a most interesting story, but on this occasion it only brought a faint look of pleasure to her pale face, and even that changed into very sober sadness as the horses, after a prolonged "whoa," from the driver, finally drew up in front of the tavern.

"Weel, my mon, ye were early astir the morn," said Sandy, as the driver grumbled out a gruff inquiry as to passengers. "I've only one for ye; the bit lassie winna tak up much room."

Barney opened the stage door, and looking in, saw that there were but three passengers; two of them were gentlemen, and the third an elderly starched-up spinster, with a blue veil tied over her bonnet, her thin lips and pointed nose being much the same color as the veil. She occupied fully two thirds of the back seat, one of the gentlemen sat muffled up beside her, and the other was making himself as comfortable as the snow permitted on the middle seat.

"Now, Margie, me darlint, don't ye forgit," said Barney, lifting the child and her small bundle in his arms. "It 's fur Terence McKeon ye're to ax whin ye git to Saybrooke, and I'll spake to Mister Hall, the driver, beyont, to put yees down near there. Take care av yourself, me jewel, an' mind, I'll be true to me word about Sunday

week." Margie's lips quivered a little, as she laid her small, white face against Barney's big, brown one, but she only said, "Good-by, Barney," in a plaintive, quiet voice, as she tried to climb up the high steps.

"Take care, my little girl; give me your bundle first," said a clear, kind voice, and the gentleman upon the back seat stretched out his hand to assist her. Margie thought she must climb over on the front seat, as the occupant of the middle one did not move, and was hesitating about taking the necessary long step, but the gentleman still kept hold of her hand, and evidently meant to make a place for her by his side.

"There must be room for such a small body here," said he, and as the cloak in which he was muffled fell aside a little, Margie caught a twinkle of the merriest, kindest hazel eyes she ever saw in her life. "There! put your foot this way — now the bundle can go on the floor."

"Plenty of room for it here, Judge," said the other gentleman, finally rousing himself enough to speak; "and room for that midge also, if she likes to come." But Margie, after looking shyly at him for half a second, concluded that she would rather stay by her new friend, and Barney, who had by this time gone plunging through the drifts to the other side of the stage, addressed them through the window.

"Much obliged to yer Honor," said he, catching the title with an Irishman's readiness. "It 's sorry I am to sind her by herself, but she 's a purty, old-fashioned young one, and won't git asthray."

"Is she your child?" asked Judge Gray, half doubting, as he put the question.

"Sorra a bit av a chick nor a child have I, yer Honor, being jined to single blessedness becase the fair creatures

won't listen to me," said Barney, with a droll wink of his eye. "No, its Darby McKeon's Margie — God rist his sowl, poor man, he died last night, — and she 's going to his brother's at Saybrooke, beyont, where perhaps yer Honor is going to hould court?"

"Exactly," said the Judge, laughing at this insinuating question. "I think I've seen you in Saybrooke; were you ever up before me?"

"Niver, indade," said Barney, emphatically, "though, begorra, yer Honor may have sint some of me frinds to the public lodging below, at Sing Sing."

"Very fair," said the other gentleman, as the Judge burst into a hearty laugh. But the impatient driver snapped his whip, and Judge Gray had barely time to assure Barney that he would see that the little girl got safely to Saybrooke, before the stage started.

Margie leaned wistfully toward the window, and waved her hand to Barney as the stage drove off; then watched him, standing in the drifts, talking with Sandy, until they turned the corner. Very long-drawn was the low sigh with which she settled herself back in the seat, and Judge Gray, attracted by the quiet self-control of so young a child, turned and looked scrutinizingly at his little companion.

What he saw was a fair, pale face, with a certain squareness about the lower part of it, a sweet little mouth, whose sad lips were drawn very determinedly together, a broad, high forehead, and a pair of beautiful gray eyes, with long, curling, black lashes — decidedly the handsome feature of the face. She wore an old calico dress, decently clean, but mended in several places; a faded red worsted hood covered her head, and wrapped around her shoulders was a white brochè shawl, very fine in texture, with a border

of delicate green and white, quite out of keeping with the dress and hood. I have said that it was a bitter cold morning, and certainly poor Margie was anything but fitly clad; but presently, just as she was beginning to feel some very disagreeable shivers stealing over her, Judge Gray unfastened the clasp of his long cloak and began to roll her up in it.

"I wonder if you are too big to sit on my knee," said he, merrily, as she looked up into his face with startled eyes. "Suppose we try. Why, no, you're not! I have a boy at home twice your size, who contrives to perch himself here very comfortably."

"But I'm afraid you won't be comfortable," said Margie, modestly, but nestling down very contentedly, notwithstanding her protest.

"What 's your name, my dear?" asked Judge Gray, secretly surprised at her purity of accent and the absence of Irish brogue.

"Marjorie," said she, simply.

"Marjorie! Why, that 's Scotch. Marjorie what?"

"I haven't any other name, sir," said she, and he saw her eyes fill with tears. Then, after a pause, "They called me McKeon, but that is not my own mother's name. I don't know what that was: I can't remember. And I don't remember mother very well, now, either; O, I *wish* I could!" Again that look of pathetic patience crossed her face, giving it a strange, old expression which touched the kindly heart of her listener.

"I think Marjorie is a very pretty name. It was my grandmother's name, and she was a funny old lady who wore a mob cap and spectacles. How would you look in spectacles, Marjorie, with your face all twisted up — so?" and Judge Gray drew his handsome face into a mirth-

provoking contortion. Marjorie's first laugh tinkled merrily out, and the Judge's eyes sparkled brighter than ever at the sound.

It was not a very long journey to Marjorie, although the horses went very slowly, and the stage got into several heavy drifts. Once, it almost upset, and that gave the passengers a slight fright at first and then a good excuse for a laugh. Marjorie put her arms very tightly around her good friend's neck and drew a long breath when the stage tipped so far over, but she did not scream or cry, and the Judge patted her head pleasantly, and praised her for being a brave child. And about five o'clock in the afternoon they reached Saybrooke; three hours, at least, behind the usual time.

"If you please, sir," said Marjorie, as they drove along the village streets on their way to the hotel, "will you ask the driver to take me to Terence McKeon's? Maybe he 's forgotten, and I don't know the way myself."

"I told your friend Barney that I would take you there," said Judge Gray. "But I think we had better find our supper first. Don't you feel hungry? I do. My old acquaintance, Mrs. Merrill, the landlady of the 'Saybrooke Arms,' will be sure to have something nice for us. After supper we'll see, my dear. Here we are, and there is good Mrs. Merrill in the window."

Judge Gray jumped briskly down on the nicely shoveled path, and having politely assisted the elderly spinster out of the stage, and her various bundles as well, he carried Marjorie into the house, and the other gentleman passenger, whose name was Mr. Stevens, very kindly brought in her bundle and laid it down on a chair. Then he said good-by to the Judge, and went off down the village street to a friend's house.

"Well, Mrs. Merrill, I've brought the snow with me this time, and plenty of it," said Judge Gray, shaking hands with the pleasant-faced landlady. "I suppose the lawyers are tired of waiting for me."

"We're always glad to see you, sir," said Mrs. Merrill, smiling. "And how is Miss Rachel, and Master Reginald?"

"Quite well; Miss Rachel's head troubles her as much as ever, but except that she is as usual. Regie is a great fellow now; you'd hardly know him, Mrs. Merrill."

Mrs. Merrill had been a valued servant in Judge Gray's family, and was Reginald's nurse until she married and came to Saybrooke. Reginald's mother had died when he was a very young child, and "Nurse Mary" was an important personage in the household as long as she remained there, almost as important as Miss Rachel herself, and she was the Judge's sister and had presided in his house ever since his wife's death.

"Where is the little girl going?" asked Mrs. Merrill, presently, when she had finished her inquiries about the family.

"She came with me from Wynn, and I think she is ready for her supper. At any rate we will have it as soon as you can give it to us. And — stop a moment; I would like to speak to you in the hall."

"Certainly sir," said Mrs. Merrill, stopping outside the door, and closing it behind her.

"Do you know anything of a family of McKeons; Terence, I think, is the man's name?" said Judge Gray.

Mrs. Merrill thought for a moment, and then shook her head. "No, sir. That is, not a respectable person of that name; there is a McKeon, an intemperate Irishman, who loafs around here, and sometimes gets a few cents from

John or me for doing chores, but he is a terribly shiftless fellow, and has a large family. They live in a wretched, tumble-down shanty in 'Beggar's Lane' — it 's our very worst quarter, you know; but John can tell you more about him than I can.

"That little girl is on her way to this man's charge," said Judge Gray. "A man whom she called Barney put her on board the stage this morning at Wynn, and, from what I can gather, she is an orphan, and is coming to live with this McKeon."

"Um!" said Mrs. Merrill, making a cautiously disapproving sound in the roof of her mouth. "Barney? O! that must be Barney Brian, a fiddler at Wynn. I know him; he 's as good-hearted a fellow as ever lived. He comes up here for dances, always, or the firemen's ball, and really, sir, you'd be quite amazed to hear the man play. Would you like to see John? I'll call him."

"No matter," said Judge Gray, interrupting her. "I will step inside the bar and see John myself. I wish you would attend to the child; and, Nurse Mary," laughing, and showing his beautiful white teeth, "don't stuff her with sugar-plums. If you do, she won't be able to eat one of those omelets which I hope you mean to give me for my supper."

Mrs. Merrill smiled pleasantly, and went away to her kitchen to prepare the best that the inn contained for her dearly loved and respected master. The Judge found John Merrill leaning over the bar, laughing at a particularly tipsy Irishman who was trying to induce him to give him "a sup o' whiskey."

"How are you, John?" said Judge Gray, his white hand extended with as kind and courtly a gesture as it would have been to one of his judicial brethren. "Is that the way you treat your customers?"

"No, indeed," said John, with emphasis, smiling back at the Judge's merry eyes. "I never let a fellow git mor'an half seas over at this 'ere bar, I tell you, sir; he 's like that half the time. A pretty poor stick is Terence McKeon."

Judge Gray looked after the reeling figure as it stumbled across the piazza, with graver face than usual. He had found an answer to his own inquiries; surely, it would be cruel to give an innocent-eyed, frail child into such guardianship as that would prove to be. So he contented himself with asking a few questions on general topics, and then he went back to the sitting-room to find little Marjorie.

The room looked very bright and cozy. It was evident that Nurse Mary's own neat fingers had laid the clean cloth, and set the dishes on the table with such precision. The blazing wood fire and nicely polished, old-fashioned andirons seemed absolute luxuries when you remembered the storm outside, and Marjorie sat on a cricket at the side of the fire-place, with a placid, contented face, watching Mrs. Merrill's portly figure as she set the table.

They had a very merry meal. Judge Gray was determined to conjure away that sad, old look which made little Marjorie's face so plaintive, and he succeeded well. Marjorie never forgot that supper. First, there was a nice, tender beefsteak, with plenty of gravy, and the Judge mashed a roast potato for her, and buttered her hot biscuit. Then she had a generous allowance of a flaky omelet (for making which Mrs. Merrill was famous), and a large tumbler of milk, and, to crown the whole, a baked apple, and a slice of cake with raisins in it. The raisins were a mystery to Marjorie, and she regarded them with uncertain eyes, until, seeing that

Judge Gray ate his cake with apparent satisfaction, she ventured upon a bite, and instantly came to the conclusion that "them soft black things" were the very nicest part of the whole supper.

By and by, when the table was cleared away, Mrs. Merrill brought in a beautiful white cat, and two kittens, one, pure white, like its mother, and the other with funny maltese spots on its tail and the tip of its nose. Marjorie got them all in her arms, and became so attached to the spotted kitten that when several gentlemen came in to see Judge Gray, she proffered a timid request to carry it up to her bed.

"That's just as Mrs. Merrill says," said Judge Gray. "She used to disapprove of cats when Reginald wanted one in his crib, but perhaps she will let you take pussy, for once. There, run to bed, my child, and wake up bright in the morning."

Marjorie took up her kitten tenderly, made one step toward the door, and then came slowly back. "Would you mind if I kissed you, sir?" said she, very softly.

For answer the little head was placed on his shoulder, and two warm, fatherly kisses were pressed on the little lonely lips that had never known a mother's caress; and although his friends were waiting, Judge Gray carried Marjorie in his arms to the kitchen, where Mrs. Merrill was sitting.

"See that she has plenty of blankets, Nurse Mary," said he, as he went away. Marjorie gazed after him with a strange swelling of her heart which she could not define.

"Hum!" said Mrs. Merrill, as she took Marjorie up to her own room, where a cot had been placed for her, and began to undress her; "some folks don't do nothing

by halves. Yes," nodding her head as she saw the sober gray eyes fixed on her face, "there ain't many men like him!"

"I guess he is a real *good* man," said Marjorie, promptly.

"Law, child, you may be sure of that. You landed on your feet *this* time. There, dear, have this night-gown — bless my soul! is that all the clothes you had on?"

Marjorie colored painfully; then she gave a sort of sob, very pitiful to hear. "I haven't any more! There 's a dress, and two pairs of drawers that Barney gave me, and an old caliker apron in the bundle" —

"There! never mind, dear," said Mrs. Merrill, soothingly; "we'll see about keeping you warm, to-morrow, and in the mean time, as good luck will have it, I've an old flannel wrapper in my bureau that belonged to Master Regie when he was a little boy, and I guess it will just about fit you."

The wrapper of red and black plaid was found, and Marjorie was so busy admiring its pretty colors that she partly forgot her mortification, and climbed into bed with a contented face, and curled down among the blankets.

"Stop a minute," said Mrs. Merrill. "Don't you say your prayers, or have you never been taught any?"

"Barney teached me an 'Ave,'" said Marjorie, "but it seems to me I used to know a prayer" — she hesitated, and spoke in the dreamy voice of one trying to recall a shadowy remembrance. "It was something — 'I pray the Lord my soul' — I don't know any more."

"This is singular," thought Mrs. Merrill. "I never knew an Irish child who could say that prayer." Then, aloud, "I guess I used to say it; say it over after me, Marjorie."

With folded hands and grave, quiet face the child said the old, sweet prayer that baby lips have lisped so often when they lie down to sleep upon a mother's breast, while Mrs. Merrill's kind eyes filled with tears of pity for the homeless, orphaned wanderer.

The last sight that Marjorie's sleep-laden eyes saw that night was the flickering candle throwing its gleam on the wall, and Nurse Mary's pleasant face as she rocked softly to and fro with the spotted kitten fast asleep in her lap.

CHAPTER II.

REGINALD.

"REGINALD," said Miss Rachel Gray, stopping in her noiseless promenade up and down the room, "I wish you would leave the piano and sit down quietly for a few moments. Your father must get here very soon."

The coal-fire burned cheerfully in the grate; and the mantel glass reflected a handsomely furnished room with a tea-table spread in the centre of it, and the fine, snowy damask, and beautifully polished silver, betrayed Miss Rachel's model housekeeping. No table that she ever had supervision of was aught but immaculate in all its details, — immaculate, but scrupulously, aye, even painfully exact.

A chord or two came from the piano in a rapid *crescendo* that strongly resembled a bang, and presently a quick, impatient step crossed the hall, and Reginald Gray marched in, his head thrown high in the air in the way that was usual for that head to be when his aunt was especially irritating.

He had his father's handsome features and complexion, with the clearly-cut, sensitive mouth, and lovely dark blue eyes of his mother's portrait, then hanging opposite the mantel. A tall, manly-looking boy, just sixteen, full of life and overflowing with fun, with the demon of teasing mischief fully developed, as poor Miss Rachel knew to her cost. Only child though he was, he had been ruled by a firm, kindly hand, and ridiculous as some of

his scrapes were he never hesitated to carry them in all their boyish foolishness to the father who laughed at and with him, even while he reproved or advised.

"Now, Aunt Rachel," began Master Regie, in his most teasing voice, "I just want to play 'Old Dan Tucker' for you, with variations. Such variations, ma'am! There 's a waltz movement, and a break-down movement, and a banjo accompaniment with the left hand, — it 's worthy of Gottschalk, I do assure you. And you're *so* fond of music."

"Some kind of music," said Miss Rachel, in her peculiarly well-bred voice, always gentle, though nature had pitched it at an unhappily high key. "I liked the hymns you were playing last Sunday."

"Yes? Did you ever know that the classical nursery rhyme of 'There was a man in our town,' goes beautifully to 'Antioch'? Our fellows did it after Greek to-day, and little Sims came out elegantly in 'and scratched, and scratched,' — high tenor, you know, Auntie," and Regie gave an ear-splitting specimen in falsetto.

"Reginald!" Miss Rachel looked disapproving, which was precisely what the mischievous boy wanted; then, recollecting that her remonstrance would do no good, his aunt dismissed the subject.

"Did you stop at your grandmother's after breakfast?" asked she.

"Yes, and the dear old lady 'tipped' me to the extent of five dollars. Won't I have fun out of that money! I don't know whether to get the new edition of the negro melodies (bound in gorgeous red covers), or a new pair of skates. Guess I'd as lief have the melodies."

Again Miss Rachel took no notice of the saucy blue eyes and curling red lips, but resumed her slow walk up

and down the room, her hand over her eyes, as was her habit when thinking. Regie watched her; there was always something peculiarly exasperating to him in her quiet, noiseless footfall; as he expressed it once, he "did wish she'd walk up and down her quarter-deck like a man and brother, — there'd be some sense in it, then."

But whatever were the reflections of aunt and nephew, they were speedily ended by the click of a latch-key in the front door, and Regie tore out into the hall, crying, "Papa, O, papa! I'm precious glad you've come."

"And I'm 'precious glad' to get here, Rex, my boy," said Judge Gray's clear, crisp voice. Regie threw his arms around his father's neck and fairly hugged him. Great boy as he was, he never went to bed without "kissing papa," and I think he would not have been ashamed to acknowledge how much he missed those good-night kisses when his father was away on circuit.

"And you, Rachel," said the Judge, as his sister met him at the dining-room door with an affectionate greeting. "How is your head? Better? I hope Rex has not been more of a plague than usual. Does the hall mat receive attention nowadays?"

Regie laughed. "I remember it about once in three times," said he, frankly; "but aunty can at least say that I leave the dirty boots in the hall. I've adopted slippers lately; see, papa," and he thrust out a foot encased in a brilliant specimen of worsted work, "Granny made me these."

"Which was very good of granny," said his father. "How is she?"

By this time the Judge had got his overcoat off, and Miss Rachel rang for supper, and they all sat down to it, while Regie related the episode of his early call upon his

grandma, and the present he had been lucky enough to receive.

"And your recitations?" asked Judge Gray. "How does the Greek progress, Rex?"

It was a noticeable fact that whatever abbreviations of his name other folk gave to Reginald Gray (and he had a school boy's usual allowance), his father almost invariably addressed him as Rex. And sometimes, when a very tender chord was touched, he would call his motherless boy "old King," with a softness of tone that invariably conquered his impetuous, warm-hearted son.

"Ten," said Regie promptly. "Have not missed one since you went away. But I don't like the catalogue of the ships, *much!* Old Homer must have racked his brain for 'em. My Latin goes on famously. O, papa, Mr. Ransom says he thinks there is no doubt of my entering Yale without conditions next summer: isn't that fine?"

His father smiled at the animated, handsome face by his side. "That's very well indeed, my son." And Regie was satisfied. When papa said "very well," it meant full satisfaction, — the boy never received more elaborate praise.

"I haven't asked you any questions yet," said Regie, after an interval of a few moments, during which he took advantage of his aunt's conversation to assist himself bountifully to marmalade. "Did you get all the cases off the calendar, papa?"

"Not quite," said his father, laughing, "but pretty well down it, the lawyers thought. Rex," pushing back his chair, "I have a story to tell you."

"Let 's have it," was the eager response. Regie's appetite for stories had not decreased with his sixteen years.

"You remember what a stormy day we had when I

left here," said Judge Gray. "I think I wrote you that I did not reach Saybrooke until very late. Stevens and I found it a pretty long, cold journey, and there were only two passengers beside ourselves. One was a little girl, about nine or ten years old; a little girl very poorly clad." The Judge's voice trembled slightly. He never could tell a story of a suffering child without real feeling.

"Her name was Marjorie," he resumed, after a brief pause. "The old cloak was very useful again, Rex; it kept her warm until we reached the Saybrooke Arms. Nurse Mary gave us a capital supper, and took the little girl into her room to sleep that night. The man who put her on board the stage had asked me to take her to a certain Terence McKeon, who lived in Saybrooke, but I resolved to inquire of Nurse Mary and John Merrill who the man was before I let the child go. I found that this McKeon was a drunken loafer with a large family, living in what they call 'Beggar's Lane,' in a tenement, and by getting hold of the fellow in one of his sober fits I soon saw that 'for a consideration' he might easily be induced to give up the little girl. She is 'no kin' to McKeon, as she expresses it; her mother is dead (Marjorie's remembrance of her seems vague, and even contradictory), and she lived in Wynn with Darby McKeon, at whose house her mother died, she says. Darby and Terence were brothers, and Darby died a fortnight since, and Judy, his wife, would not keep Marjorie any longer but sent her on to Saybrooke to Terence. The only decent person of the set seems to be the fiddler who brought her to the stage that morning; his name is Barney Brian, and Nurse Mary says he is a good-hearted, shiftless fellow, who could make a livelihood by his fiddling if he did not squander his money as fast as he earns it. I saw Barney for a few

moments as I came through Wynn to-day, and the fellow actually shed tears when I told him I thought of doing something for Marjorie. 'It 's the swate little darlint she is,' said he, 'and heaven's own angels be about yer Honor's bed if yees does a good turn for her.'"

"O, papa, will you bring her home — here?" cried Regie, excitedly.

"My dear Reginald," began Miss Rachel, deprecatingly.

"I want to consult you and grandma, Rachel," said Judge Gray, turning to her. Miss Rachel was visibly gratified.

"Do you think of bringing her here?" asked she. "An Irish child, James? I am afraid that we could hardly avoid unpleasant complications."

Regie's mouth went down provokingly. Miss Rachel had a set of phrases peculiar to herself which he knew by heart. Regard for his father alone restrained him from a most disrespectful whistle at the familiar polysyllable.

"I do not intend to keep her in my home permanently," said Judge Gray, quietly. "Of course, she would remain here for a while until she grows somewhat accustomed to the city. I thought of asking grandma for admittance to the orphan asylum for her. What do you think of it, Rachel?"

"It might be feasible," said Miss Rachel cautiously. "I do not know whether the lady managers admit the poor of another county in ours."

"Rubbish!" cried Regie, exploding.

"Who are you speaking to, my son?" said Judge Gray.

"But it is — I beg your pardon, Aunt Rachel — you know that granny won't say no to a poor child whom my father chose to befriend; she'd give her right hand any day to do papa a service."

"Softly, Rex. Well, Rachel, I think I can arrange it with grandma." He rose as he spoke. "I will step over and see her now. Stevens promised to bring Marjorie on, and I wish to write to him by to-morrow's mail if possible."

"But, my dear James," said Miss Rachel, quite upset by this speedy introduction of an Irish child into the well-regulated household over which she presided. "Had you not better allow me to write to Mrs. Merrill, and make a few more inquiries? Would it not be more prudent to wait for further developments?"

Regie's naughty blue eyes twinkled, but Judge Gray carefully avoided looking at him, and said pleasantly in reply, —

"I'm afraid that Marjorie would grow tired waiting, and I shall have no good opportunity unless I accept Stevens' offer. No, thank you, Rachel, I made all the inquiries that are necessary. Rex, if you like, you may go with me to your grandmother's."

Regie rushed frantically for his cap and clattered down the hall behind his father, regardless of the sound of Miss Rachel's calm voice which reminded him that he had left his mittens on a chair in the dining-room.

Mrs. Livingston was sitting knitting in a corner of the sofa, with the light turned down a little in the back parlor, when Judge Gray and Regie walked in through the side door. Grandpa was up-stairs in his own room reading the evening paper, and so grandma improved the time by finishing off one of the blue yarn stockings for the orphan children at the asylum, of which the dear old lady kept a perpetual stock on hand.

"Is that you, Regie?" called grandma, in a cheerful, bright voice. Grandma's voice, like her loving heart,

would never grow old. "I thought you'd be over, for Betsey made a fresh batch of crullers this afternoon, — why, there 's Mr. Gray."

Mrs. Livingston could never bring her tongue to call her son-in-law, Judge, except in speaking of him; she never called him James, and never would, probably.

"Are you quite well, mother?" asked the Judge, kissing her.

Regie started for the pantry in the back parlor, to make acquaintance with the crullers, and returned presently with a goodly supply. He never was known to refuse cake in any form; Aunt Rachel's cake-crocks were in a state of perpetual bankruptcy. Grandma listened with great interest while Judge Gray told the story of his having found Marjorie in the stage-coach, and (to Regie's infinite triumph) gave her opinion that it would be an excellent plan to send for the child.

"There are two vacancies in the asylum, or will be shortly," said she. "I will go up to-morrow and consult Miss Brooks." Miss Brooks was the matron of the asylum. "Did you see about getting clothes for little Marjorie, or shall I attend to it?"

"I gave Nurse Mary some money for purchasing the material, and she offered to have them made," said Judge Gray.

"Mary Merrill? O, then it will be well done," said grandma contentedly. "What does Rachel think of your plan?"

Regie winked wickedly at his grandmother, and she shook her head and began to laugh at him. Dear grandma! how she did spoil that boy.

"I don't think that Rachel will object when she thinks it over," said Judge Gray. And then grandma knew it

was settled that Marjorie should come, and that Miss Rachel would be reasoned into a resigned acquiescence when Master Regie was out of the way.

After this, Judge Gray went up-stairs and talked over politics with grandpa, which, as they were totally opposed in their views, was a difficult matter to manage amicably with the old gentleman, and Regie stayed below, and ate crullers, and laid plans with grandma for Marjorie's amusement, and told stories of school scrapes which made grandma laugh till she cried. Grandma's laughing tears were always a gratifying tribute to Regie's powers of description, so he escorted his father home at a late hour in a contented frame of mind, and flying up-stairs three steps at a time, delivered a double knock on poor Aunt Rachel's door, shouting, —

"Granny 's a brick! The little girl 's to come next week."

And then mischievous Regie rushed off to bed.

CHAPTER III.

BARNEY'S STORY.

"MARJORIE!"

Mrs. Merrill's pleasant voice sounded through the passage and up the stairs into the little room where Marjorie sat playing with the cat and both kittens.

"Yes 'um, I'm coming," cried she, lifting one kitten down carefully from the table, and tucking the other under her arm as she went down, the old cat following her, and brushing against the skirt of her dress. Marjorie's fortnight with Mrs. Merrill had been of perceptible service; there was a tinge of color in her pale cheeks, and the little face was losing its plaintive, startled look. She turned the knob of the kitchen door and stood before Mrs. Merrill with a quiet smile in her beautiful gray eyes.

Mrs. Merrill was not alone: a gray-haired, nice looking woman sat by the stove with her lap full of bundles. "So, that 's the little girl," said she, in a quick, but not disagreeable voice. "She 's smaller'n I thought. I needn 't hev got more 'an three yards and a half of that delaine."

"This is Miss Banks, Marjorie," said Mrs. Merrill. "I told you that Judge Gray left some money with me to buy a dress and cape and a few other things for you. Well, Miss Banks and I are going to sit down and run them up for you, for I have had a letter from Judge Gray, and he says that if you are willing to come, Mr. Stevens will take you to the city on Saturday."

Marjorie's color changed rapidly during this speech.

"Going to see Judge Gray — to stay? Not going to Terence McKeon's! And Barney's not come yet; he was coming next Sunday, *sure*. I can't go off without seeing Barney, you know," finished the child, in great distress.

Miss Banks and Mrs. Merrill exchanged glances.

"You're a good, grateful child," said Mrs. Merrill warmly. "No more you shan't go off without seeing Barney Brian. He 's coming to play for the 'Hook and Ladder' (they have a ball to-morrow night), and he'll be sure to be there. And now, just look here; don't you think that 's a nice dress for a little girl?"

Marjorie looked at the parcel that Mrs. Merrill was unrolling. It was a brown delaine with tiny red spots sprinkled all over it, very pretty and appropriate, and Marjorie drew a long breath of satisfaction.

"For me?" said she, in a delighted voice. "That buti-ful dress. And shoes! And what 's that for?"

"Cotton, to make two chemises," said Mrs. Merrill.

Marjorie sat down on the kitchen floor, and clasping both arms around her treasures began to cry suddenly.

"Bless me! what ails the child?" demanded Miss Banks, pulling off her bonnet and fitting her thimble on her finger with a business-like face.

"I — I — don't just know," sobbed Marjorie. "I — never — had such a nice dress before. And I *love* Judge Gray!" Mrs. Merrill patted her head kindly.

"There! dear. He would n't want you to cry, and this dress will have to be fitted. Suppose you stand up and let Miss Banks measure you for a body."

Marjorie had no idea what a "body" was, but she dried her eyes obediently, and stood up while the dressmaker pinned some gray lining on her frock, and cut it here, and snipped it there, frightening her with the size

of her scissors and their close proximity to her neck. And she also wondered, privately, why Miss Banks always produced pins from her mouth ; was it possible that she used her tongue as a sort of pincushion ? Marjorie felt of her own tongue, and resolved to look in the glass when she went to bed and see if there could be any holes in it to hold the pins.

All that day, and the next, good Mrs. Merrill and Miss Banks sat over their sewing, and Marjorie watched them, and finally begged for something to do. Miss Banks laughed, but gave her a needle and thread and a bit of delaine, and she sat contentedly stitching away at it, making believe that she was sewing on an apron for pussy. When it was finished, and tied around pussy's neck, Marjorie was rather annoyed to find that she did not appreciate it as an apron but preferred to make a ball of it instead.

She was laughing quite merrily at pussy's antics, and did not hear the outer door of the kitchen open, and the first thing she knew a big, brown hand was laid on hers and Barney's voice said, —

" Be the piper that played before Moses, I niver heard ye laugh like that afore, Margie ! An' how 's me darlint this long whiles past ? "

Marjorie jumped up, kissed him heartily, and patted his rough red hair in her odd, old way, but said very little of the change in her future prospects until Mrs. Merrill went out of the kitchen, presently, to give Miss Banks her supper. Then the child's tongue was free to run on, and run it did, in a free, glad way that delighted her hearer.

" Och ! but it 's a lucky girl ye are," said Barney, when Marjorie paused for breath. " I knows what folks say

of the Judge, and ivery man has a good word for him, even the poor divils what 's up afore him. An' if ye had to go, sure, I'm glad its wid his Honor ye wint; ye'll not forgit your ould friend, Barney, darlint?"

"Never!" Marjorie's arms clasped his neck tighter than ever.

"There, acushla, I didn't mane it. Sure, I'll be coming to the city, beyont, some av these days. An' I'm moighty glad (though sorra a bit would I say it before), I'm moighty plased that you are laving Terence, for, savin' yer presence, he 's going to the bad, I'm tould, and it 's no fit place for the loikes of ye."

"I never wanted to go," said Marjorie. "Maybe his wife would be like Judy, and you know she beat me awfully."

"Whist! don't think about it. Come out intil the ball-room an' hear me make music for the b'ys. That is, if Mrs. Merrill will let ye," as the landlady entered.

"It 's Marjorie's bed-time," said Mrs. Merrill. "I think she can hear the sound of your music up in my room, Barney. You can see her in the morning."

Barney shook his head. "I'll have to be off to-night, for Jim Maguire has give me lift in his sleigh, and I must go whin he does. But" — Barney hesitated in his turn, and cleared his throat with a vigorous cough, "perhaps, ma'am, ye'd let Margie stay up a bit longer, and I could talk wid her; I'll not be going to play just yit."

"Certainly," said Mrs. Merrill, for she remembered that as Marjorie was to leave Saybrooke on Saturday, in all probability Barney would not get over again to see her. "If you like, you may take Barney up into my room, Marjorie. You'll be less disturbed there."

"Thank ye kindly," said Barney, rising with alacrity,

and taking the child by the hand. "Let me know whin the b'ys begin to come in grate numbers, plase — I'll not kape her purty eyes open too long."

"'Dade, but this is nice," said Barney, when Marjorie had showed him her clean cot bed, and made him open the closet door where her new dress hung, and tried on her new shoes for him. "Come up in me arms, honey; wid all these fine things I'll be thinking it 's not Margie at all, but some other little girl. How would ye like me to tell a story?"

"About the red fox?" said Margie, climbing up on his knee.

"No; quite a new one. Margie," cautiously, "do you remember your mother?"

Marjorie sat upright, and opened her eyes in surprise.

Whenever she had asked any questions on that subject, Barney had always evaded them.

"Not very much," said she, slowly. "Of course I remember the day she died, you know, — and one more."

"What was that?" asked Barney.

"It must have been a long time before that," said Marjorie. "We were in a big room, mother and me, and there was an old man, with white hair, and very big, black eyes, who was cross, and spoke in an awful voice, and made mother cry. I ran up to him once, and he gave me a push, which almost made me fall, and — I don't remember any more." She paused for a moment. "There was a queer, big bird in the room, a gray bird, up over the door, and it frightened me. I don't remember any more, Barney, and sometimes I 'm afraid I dreamed that. Except about the big bird; I *know* I saw him over that black door."

"You must have been a very little girl, Margie, for

ye wasn't more than four whin I saw ye first. And it 's only becase you're going away that I mane to tell you what I knows. You always was axing was you any kin to Darby McKeon; you ain't, not at all. But all the same, I don't know who you are, rightly.

"It was one night airly in December, five years ago a couple av weeks past, and it was storming very hard. I had come over till Darby's for a gossip wid him, and the night was so bad that he bid me stay till morning, and tould Judy to make a shake-down for me. We were all sitting forninst the fire whin we heard a sudden, sharp cry loike, — av a child, outside the door.

"'Howly Mary!' says Darby. 'What 's that!'

"'It sounds like a Banshee,' says Judy, her two eyes starting out av her head.

"'It 's a poor unfortunate that 's out in the snow,' says I, jumping up, 'an' I'll open the door and see what is it.'

"And wid that, I shoves the door open wid difficulty, for there was a big drift over agin it, and there I see a heap of something, all black, and a little child standing by it. That was you, Margie; do you mind?"

"No, only the cold and the awful snow, and mother's falling." The child shivered, and turned very pale. "Why don't I remember you, Barney?"

"Because ye were sick and loike to die after that. That 's why I axed you did ye remember *anything;* I thought mayhap you'd remember where ye was afore that night."

"I can't!" said Marjorie, shaking her head, mournfully.

"Well, Darby an' me wint out, and found that the black heap was a woman, and we carried her inside and laid her forninst the fire. We thought she was dead, but

after a long while we got a sup av whiskey betune her shut teeth, and by and by she opened her eyes (as swate eyes as iver ye see — black as a sloe, and soft as velvet), but she was raving crazy, and talked a quare dale of stuff, some in English, and more in a forrin' tongue that we didn't understand. It 's a faver she had, av the brain, an' she niver got to be raisonable agin." Here Barney paused. "That is, not raisonable to be worth spaking of," thought he. "Maybe she wasn't quite herself that day, nayther." And having thus quieted his conscience for telling a white lie, he resumed his story.

"You called yerself 'Marjorie' quite plain, darlint, but ye did not seem to know any other name. And after your mother died ye had a faver too, and I 'spose that 's why its hard for ye to remember."

"Why did you never tell me this story before?" asked Marjorie, with an eager, unsatisfied look on her little face.

"Sure, 'twas no use."

"Didn't my mother have some clothes?" asked she.

"I always said ye had an ould head," said Barney, admiringly. "Whisper — yes; but sure, 'twas but a few, and Judy sould 'em all for whiskey, except the shawl ye have; your mother wore that the night we found her, and Darby forbid Judy to have it. But, Margie, there was one thing av your's, which, by grate good luck, I tuk away from ye. Your dress was foine and white, and yer purty little arms was bare, and your sleeves tied up wid little bracelets, loike. Anyhow, there was one; I niver see the other. Perhaps Judy got it, or you lost it that night in the snow. Anyway, here 's the one I've had this five year, dear. And I

want you to tie it around your neck wid a bit av string, and the Howly Virgin 'll kape you from ill."

"Because I wear it?" asked Marjorie, shrewdly.

"Yes; don't ye give it away, and if you're afeard of losing it, let somebody who 's rale good and kind to ye, kape it for ye till you is grown up to be a woman."

After much fumbling, Barney drew out of his pocket a scrap of paper, which he unrolled, and a little baby's armlet was disclosed to Marjorie's wondering eyes. It was of very fine gold, a string of small fretted beads, the clasp a single bead of coral, somewhat larger than the others.

"See here, Margie," said Barney, turning the little bracelet over and showing her the outside of the clasp. "There 's two letters here — you nor me can't read 'em, but I got Sandy Ferguson at the tavern beyont to tell me what them was, thinking they might be the letters 'av your name. And I said 'em over till I learned 'em by heart, — '*M. H.*' Don't 'M' stand for Marjorie?"

"Does it?" asked she.

"Sandy said it did," said Barney.

"And is that *all?*" asked the child in a sad, disappointed voice. "Don't you know my real name, Barney?"

"No, darlint. But sure you used to ax me so many questions, and beside, I thought you'd be glad to find ye was nothing to the McKeon's."

"So I am," said Marjorie. "But I was certain sure of *that*, always, you know."

Barney looked at her with a shrewd twinkle in his eye. "It 's a rale lady she is," thought he, "and that 's the blood showin' itself." And then he heard Mrs. Merrill's footstep in the hall, and she called him from the foot of the stairs.

"Coming, ma'am," said he. "Now, Margie, darlint, you mind I'll be down to the city some of these days to see yees. And I'll aisy find where his Honor lives, and we'll have a good time when I come."

Then poor Marjorie burst into tears. She had tried hard to keep from crying, but Barney was her oldest friend, and her grateful little heart clung to him, fondly. And after a long hug, and half a dozen kisses, Barney's own eyes were moist.

"There, don't ye; the b'ys will be stamping fur me in a shake, Margie. The Howly Virgin be about ye; say one of yer purty prayers for Barney, sometimes, and don't forget to keep the little bracelet careful!"

Marjorie sat down on the floor and hid her little face in the chair, trying not to make a noise, and Mrs. Merrill found her thus, and took her up, and tried to comfort her. But the child grieved bitterly, and for two nights afterward, cried in her sleep and called "Barney!" thereby waking Mrs. Merrill, who felt so much sympathy that she could not find it in her heart to scold her.

But as Barney went off down-stairs after bidding Marjorie good-by, his mind evidently misgave him, for he turned about and drew a small package from his pocket. "Ought I to give 'em to her I wonder?" thought he. "I promised the mother—but faix, she 's too young yet: she couldn't begin a search for ever so many years; no, I'll kape 'em. If I gets a chance, perhaps I'll give 'em to the Judge. But I dunno but it 'ud be nicer to find out her faythe meself!" So the package, whatever it was, went back into Barney's pocket, and the story of Marjorie's parentage remained as dark as before.

Saturday came at last, and Marjorie (though she had by no means forgotten her grief at leaving Barney) was

enough like other children to feel greatly excited at the prospect of another journey. And this time it was a pleasurable one, with Judge Gray at the end of it. Marjorie began to want to see her kind friend very much. So her grave little face had a pretty, pink flush on it, which, together with her new dress and cape and a neat little straw hat with red ribbons (it was an old one of Mrs. Merrill's, cut down and trimmed over very ingeniously, to suit its juvenile wearer), quite transformed her.

"Bless me!" said Mr. Stevens, coming into the sitting-room before the stage started. "Is that the child, Mrs. Merrill? What have you been doing to her? You've made a beauty of her."

"She 's a good child," said Nurse Mary, prudently, "and a dear warm-hearted thing, sir. I haven't done anything but make a few clothes for her (Judge Gray was good enough to give me the money to buy the stuff), and, of course, that does change her. There, Marjorie, I've put up some ginger-snaps and an apple in this little basket. You may keep the basket; I guess Master Reginald will remember it, for he gave it to me, long ago. I lent her a bag for her few clothes, Mr. Stevens, if you'll be so kind as to ask Judge Gray to let it come back by express, — any time will do, there 's no hurry. Good-by, Margie, good-by; give Nurse Mary's love to Master Regie,"— and the good woman followed them quite out to the door, and stood waving her apron to the stage as long as it was in sight.

Marjorie wished very much that Mr. Stevens had taken the route which lay through Wynn, for she thought that perhaps she might have had a glimpse of Barney, or at any rate of Sandy Ferguson, on the way; but this stage took the direct route to the railroad, and therefore the lawyer took it, being in haste to get to town again.

Marjorie had never been on a railroad before, and it frightened her terribly, at first, when the great, black, puffing locomotive rushed into the station, and began to blow off steam. She clinched Mr. Stevens' hand very tightly, and he saw that she was quite pale.

"Afraid, eh?" said he, as he swung the little figure on the platform of the car. "I forgot that you had never seen a locomotive. I should not have stood so close to it. Why, it won't hurt you, child."

"I've seen pictures of the locum,"— ventured Marjorie, timidly, as Mr. Stevens put her into a seat and took his place beside her. "What makes it spit so?"

Mr. Stevens laughed. "That 's steam," said he. He might as well have told her it was Greek, and seeing from her mystified look that his remark was totally unintelligible, he added: "It would take some time to explain it, and you might not understand it if I did, but you'll learn all about it when you grow bigger. You needn't be afraid of it, however; — there, we're off. See how the fences and houses fly by!"

After the first strange sensation Marjorie enjoyed the motion of the cars very much, and sat back in her corner very contentedly, her great gray eyes fixed eagerly on the landscape. By and by she began to entertain herself by looking about the car. It was well filled, and the different groups amused her. There was a young lady opposite, with a red feather in her bonnet, and a great many sparkling rings on her white hands. Marjorie wondered if she ever took them off, and whether soap and water would hurt them. A woman with a baby attracted her next. Marjorie liked babies, even dirty Patsey McKeon was a playmate for her; and moreover he would generally cease howling when she took him. This baby had blue

eyes, and dimples, and was clean and rosy; she wondered if she might not give it one of her red apples to play with. But she was far too timid to venture to propose such a liberty to Mr. Stevens, so she contented herself with smiling at the baby and wishing that she dared to go across the aisle and speak to it. After the baby, Marjorie was the most amused with a little girl of apparently her own age, who sat directly in front of her. She had long, brown ringlets (Marjorie's hair was yellow, and although beautifully fine and luxuriant, she fancied it was very ugly), and this little stranger's hair was tied up under a black velvet hat with long plumes. Not that Marjorie had the least idea of the relative merits of velvet *versus* straw, or thought that the little girl's hat was any more costly than her own; she only saw that it was prettier and more graceful. And then this child had a muff, and little cuffs of the same fur, and a deep blue dress and cape. Marjorie gave one of her long-drawn sighs of satisfaction as she watched her.

The time flew quite rapidly for Marjorie, much more so than it did for Mr. Stevens, who, after his newspaper had been read, composed himself in a corner and fell fast asleep, until a brakeman sung out "Binghamton!" and added that the train stopped five minutes for refreshments. Mr. Stevens told Marjorie to sit still, and went out, returning with a sandwich, a piece of sponge-cake, and an orange for her. Marjorie put the orange in her basket, but ate the sandwich, and found the sponge-cake very good. She had never eaten any before, and therefore it tasted better to her than cake served at a railway restaurant would probably prove to those more fortunate little girls who have it frequently upon their own tea-tables.

In a short time Binghamton lay far behind them, and the express ran on at a speed that began to frighten Marjorie again. But seeing that Mr. Stevens was sleeping with apparent comfort by her side, she leaned her head against the window pane, and while watching the little girl's nodding feathers in front of her, fell asleep also, and did not awake until Mr. Stevens laid his hand on her arm.

"You've been having a good long nap," said he, as she started up, wide awake immediately, and (for a moment) unable to remember where she was. "Here we are, just coming into the depot, and I shouldn't wonder if we found Judge Gray waiting for us. Ha! I told you so," for as the car stopped, a gentleman came in the door, "Here we are, Judge, all safe and sound. She 's as good a traveller as if she were fifty years old."

"Why, Marjorie!"—she did not need the Judge's extended hand to tell her that she was welcome; the child gave a cry of pure joy and sprang straight into his arms, hugging him with all her strength.

"I declare," said Mr. Stevens, laughing, but half in earnest, "I wish I had your talisman, Judge. What 's the reason that the children always love you?"

Marjorie could have told, but Judge Gray said it for her: "For the same reason that the lamb loved Mary," said he, "'cause Mary loved the lamb, you know.' Where 's the bag, Marjorie? Stevens, I'm extremely obliged to you for doing me the favor to escort this child."

"Not a word, I beg," said Mr. Stevens, heartily, as they got out of the train. "Very happy to do anything for you, my dear Judge. I suspect we shall hear more of this young lady some of these days. Good-by, Marjorie," and he left them at the door of the carriage.

Marjorie's shy tongue was loosened as soon as the carriage door was shut, and it ran on in one joyous stream until they reached their destination. Judge Gray listened with a pleasant smile while she told him all about the journey, and the "locum," and the baby, and the little girl with long curls, and lastly, her new dress.

"This is it, you know, sir," said she, touching it with her hand; "it 's bu-ti-ful! with red spots. *And* my shoes!" — up went a little foot on his knee.

"Quite Miss Goody-two-shoes, are you not?" asked Judge Gray. "What, you don't know that story, Marjorie? You must ask Rex to read it to you. Here we are," as the carriage stopped, "and there is my sister in the window, and Rex on the door-step. Yes, she 's here," he added, as Regie came flying down bare-headed to meet them.

"How are you, Marjorie? I'll carry her up the steps, papa, they're slippery."

Marjorie looked up at him, but her timidity vanished as the merry blue eyes laughed back at her, and she submitted to be carried up the stone steps. Regie set her down inside the door.

"Why, you're a little mite of a thing," said he, keeping hold of her hand. "Aunt Rachel, this is Marjorie," and he walked straight into Miss Rachel's serene presence.

"How do you do, my dear?" said she, very kindly. Miss Rachel was always kind to children. She was pleased to see that the child, if she was Irish, bore none of the characteristics of that nation in her face, and she looked approvingly at Nurse Mary's dress-making. But Marjorie kept Regie's fingers in a tight clasp, and quiet as she looked he could feel her small hand tremble in his.

"I'll take off your hat," said he, untying the strings

with unusual deftness for a boy. "What pretty yellow hair she has; look, aunty, it 's fine as can be."

A funny little smile came over Marjorie's face, and Regie saw it. "What are you laughing at?" said he, suddenly.

"Nothing — only" — stammered poor Marjorie, very shamefacedly, — "Judy called it 'lasses candy,' and I think it 's so ugly."

"It 's no such thing," said Regie warmly, but unable to help laughing at the "lasses candy."

"You had better take Marjorie up-stairs, and give Jane her cape and hat," said Miss Rachel. "Tea is almost ready. There is a bed for her, you know, in the little room at the head of the stairs. Unless she would prefer sleeping with Jane. Are you afraid to sleep alone, Marjorie?"

"No, ma'am." Marjorie's eyes were round with delight at the idea of a little room all by herself.

"That 's right, Rex," said his father, meeting the pair as they were going up-stairs; "take care of her and amuse her."

Marjorie thought it was very funny to have a big boy like Regie pour out some water in the wash-bowl for her (the pitcher was too heavy for her to lift), and then show her where the soap was, and open a door and hang up her hat and cape in a small closet. She was losing all fear of him; indeed, Regie had his father's own peculiar attraction for children, and mischievous as he was, was never rough. Beside, having no sister, he had an intense longing for one, and greatly admired little girls, although boy-like he kept it locked up in his own breast for fear the boys might "chaff" him.

"Will those posies wash off?" said Marjorie, pausing

as she dried her hands on the towel, and pointing respectfully at the flowers on the outside of the pitcher.

"You might try scrubbing 'em with soap," said Regie, quizzically. "Why, no, Marjorie, they're painted. Did you never see flowers on china before?"

"No," said she. "Judy washed me at the trough, and Mrs. Merrill had white — what-you-call-'ems"—

"Basins," corrected Regie. "There 's the tea-bell. Give me your hand. I'll ride you down stairs pick-a-back."

Marjorie was rather alarmed when she found that mysterious word meant mounting her between his shoulders, but his arms held her so firmly that before they reached the bottom of the stairs she enjoyed it, and they made their entrance into the dining-room in that familiar fashion. Aunt Rachel looked rather shocked, but Judge Gray laughed, and began quoting "Mother Goose" at Regie, and patted Marjorie on the head, and gave her a hot biscuit and some oysters. She had a continual struggle with her timidity, however, during the entire meal. The silver fork with its four prongs troubled her, and she gave Judge Gray one of her touching, grateful glances when he quietly put a spoon on her plate instead; and the well-dressed servant, Jane, standing behind Miss Rachel's chair and handing the dishes around on what Marjorie thought was a "great big silver plate" annoyed her terribly. She did not eat much, to Regie's concern, and he slipped a piece of cake into her hand as they rose from the table. "Come in the parlor with me," said he; "I'll look out for the crumbs, aunty; she won't let 'em drop on the carpet. Do you like music, Marjorie?"

"Barney plays, you know," said she, "and he sings 'Rory O'More' sometimes for me, and 'Colleen Bawn,' and"—

Marjorie stopped short, in a perfect maze. Her feet sank into such a soft, soft carpet, with beautiful bunches of pink and blue flowers in it, on a pure white ground; pictures, of different sizes in gilt frames covered the walls, and lastly, she gave a great gasp of fright as she caught sight of the long mirror which extended to the floor.

"Who 's that little girl?" demanded she, squeezing Regie's fingers very hard, and speaking in a whisper. Regie stared, first at her face, then at the pier-glass, and finally burst into a ringing peal of laughter.

"O! Marjorie, you funny, funny child! Don't you know what a mirror is? Why, that 's a little girl whom you're intimately acquainted with; her name is Marjorie — there!" and he led her up close.

"Why — *it 's me!*" The amazed whisper cannot be transcribed. Then, after looking at the reflection for a minute, a bit of a smile crossed Marjorie's troubled face. "How nice my dress looks — *and* my shoes!"

"Regular girl," quoth Regie, delightedly. "Come, you'll have a chance to see yourself often enough. I want to play for you." And he carried her over to the piano, and established her small person in a large chair, and then sitting down, ran his fingers over the keys. The piano was a grand action and of lovely tone, and Regie was a musical wonder for a boy of his age. He played remarkably well, and after giving Marjorie a specimen of "Rory O'More," and "Old Dan Tucker," he glided off into chords and improvising, and, finally forgetting all about his little auditor, played the beautiful pathetic prayer from "Moses in Egypt."

Marjorie sat in a dream of pure delight. She was so happy that she wanted to cry; the sensitive, highly-strung nature was bewildered at itself. And Regie, up among

the musical clouds himself, was suddenly recalled to the present by a little hand on his arm, and a voice which said, —

"Please, *please* don't! I want my mother, — O, *dear!*"

The sigh went straight to his heart. In another minute little Marjorie was on his knee with her yellow head on his shoulder, and he was kissing her, and talking so merrily that she had no idea that his eyes were full of tears. His own blue-eyed, beautiful mother came back to the boy's remembrance, and Marjorie's little plaintive cry had gained her a place in Regie's impetuous heart which she never lost.

"I like your fiddle," said she, after laughing at some sally of his that sounded marvelously like his genial father.

"My what?"

"Your fiddle, — this," touching the white keys reverently. "It 's every bit as nice as Barney's."

"Thank you," said Regie, smiling at this very modest compliment. "But this isn't a fiddle, Madge (I'm going to call you Madge, may I? Then I'll have a name for you that nobody else had, just as papa calls me Rex); this is a piano. Say it after me."

Which Marjorie did, obediently, although she said "pianner," and Regie corrected her, and made her repeat it until her pronunciation was right.

"Come, children," called Judge Gray, from the hall, "Aunt Rachel thinks it 's time for Marjorie to go to bed, and you ought to get at your Greek, Rex. Run along, you lazy dogs. I'll catch you," and he sprang up-stairs after them in as frolicsome a mood as Regie himself.

Miss Rachel was standing at the door of Marjorie's little room. "You undress yourself, Marjorie, do you not?" said she.

"Yes, ma'am." Somehow, Marjorie could not get beyond monosyllables with Miss Rachel.

"Good-night, my dear. Jane, tuck her in nicely, and see that she says her prayers, — dear me! are you a Romanist, child?"

"A what, ma'am?" asked bewildered Marjorie.

"What sort of prayers do you say?"

"Barney teached me an 'Ave,' but Mrs. Merrill knew the prayer my own mother said. I say that now," said Marjorie, with an effort.

"That 's right, my dear. Good-night again," and Miss Rachel closed the door, and went softly away.

Jane had bright, snapping eyes, and a rather jerky way of doing things Marjorie found, for she whisked off the child's clothes in a trice, and told her, in a pert voice, to "hurry up." So, Marjorie would not say, "Now I lay me" out loud as she had done with Mrs. Merrill, but knelt down by the bed and repeated it to herself reverently. Then Jane tucked her up as Miss Rachel had directed, and took away the light, and Marjorie's tired eyes closed, and she slept peacefully as an infant in her new home.

CHAPTER IV.

SANTA CLAUS' VISIT.

"I THINK it 's very unwise," said Mrs. Marston, decidedly. "James is so benevolent and kind that he does not reflect what the result will be. Why, my dear Mrs. Livingston, you know that if that child remains much longer at my brother's she will be quite unfitted for going to the asylum. The way that Reginald goes on about her" —Mrs. Marston checked herself prudently. Grandma never would listen to any disparagement of Regie.

"Regie is very fond of little girls," said grandma, smiling.

"Then his admiration does not extend to his relatives," said Mrs. Marston, sharply, glancing toward the window, where sat a very showily dressed young lady of ten years. "But Lily is peculiar; she has her fancies also, I find. I must do Rachel the justice to say that she does try to keep that Irish child in her place, but she is so kind-hearted that if Marjorie (is that her name, Lily?) — if Marjorie keeps clean and doesn't make crumbs on the carpet she is at liberty to roam all over the house. To-day when I went there after lunch, will you believe it! I found Marjorie perched upon the divan in the dining-room, and Reginald playing on the piano for her; yes, indeed,"— Mrs. Marston paused, out of breath. She was a very handsome, stylish woman, but, it need hardly be added, very unlike her brother. Marjorie had been an inmate of Judge Gray's family for about ten days, and to-day (being the day before Christmas) Mrs. Marston had gone to

superintend the Christmas tree for Regie, as was her custom, and was very much annoyed to find that the presents hung upon it marked with Marjorie's name were almost as numerous as those of his little cousins. Regie had become warmly interested in Marjorie, and had not only expended most of his pocket money in gifts for her, but had wheedled and coaxed his grandmother into purchasing a pretty, though inexpensive set of gray squirrel furs for his protege, to which the dear old lady added a box of candy, and a pair of red yarn stockings. Mrs. Marston was too wise to attack her brother upon the impropriety of his patronage of an orphan child, but preferred to make a statement of her views to Grandma Livingston, hoping that they would, in this way, reach Judge Gray.

"Well," said grandma, secretly amused, and reading disapproval of the furs in Mrs. Marston's eyes, "I think Marjorie is a very remarkably well behaved child, and Regie is so much older than she that I see no harm in their being together. Somehow, Helen, I do not believe she can be Irish; her language is so very good, and although she makes mistakes in grammar, she has no Irish brogue, you know."

"Irish or not, if she is to go into the asylum I think it very unwise to let her stay so long at James'," replied Mrs. Marston.

"There has been scarlet fever at the asylum," said grandma, "and of course, we could not send her there until the danger of infection is over. Marjorie seems quite a delicate child; when she had a bad cold this week Dr. Gibbs saw her, and he told me afterwards that she must at some time have passed through a severe fit of illness, and added that he should be afraid of a fever and

its effect upon her constitution. I saw Miss Brooks yesterday, and she told me that there were four cases now of scarlet fever: why, I don't think it would be prudent to send Marjorie there for a month, at least."

"I am sorry to hear it. I shall keep Lily away from my brother's as much as I can. I don't choose to have her in such company."

"Tut, tut," said grandma, clicking her knitting needles, "you don't mean that, Helen. Good, clean children can contaminate nobody; *my* daughters always played with Nurse Laney's children, and I never found that it injured them in the least."

And grandma straightened herself a little proudly, for she was a Vanderventer, and had as much family pride as anybody can have in our democratic country, although she was too thorough a lady to ever boast of the fact.

"I suppose you will come over to-morrow night and see the tree?" said Mrs. Marston, drawing her sable furs around her throat and rising as she spoke. "Lily, run and kiss Grandma Livingston. She has been talking about Betsey's crullers all day" —

"Dear me, I forgot," interrupted grandma; "run into the pantry, Lily, and find them. There was a platter full of New-Year's cake, but I imagine that Regie paid it a visit this morning. Good-by Helen; don't forget to send me that recipe for oyster soup that you promised me," and grandma trotted out to the door-step to see her visitors off.

Christmas Day dawned bright and beautiful, a "real perfection of a Christmas," as Regie styled it, when he came rushing in to breakfast all rosy and rampant over a snow-ball fight with Marjorie on the door-steps. Aunt Rachel suggested that he should run over and wish his grandparents a merry Christmas, and, after he had gone,

she very kindly took Marjorie on her knee and told her a Bible story, about the Star in the East which the wise men saw on that wonderful Christmas morning long ago. Marjorie thought it was beautiful, and when she went upstairs to be dressed for church she repeated it all to Jane. But Jane was not appreciative, and did not seem to care for little stories, but told her how the church would be dressed with greens and flowers, and how she would see a star there, in good earnest.

"In the day-time?" said Marjorie. "You're not telling me true, Jane. Stars don't shine in the morning."

"Don't you be telling me I don't spake the truth," said Jane, enforcing her remark with a small shake of the arm she was washing. "Not a rale star, you goose, but one av gas, sure, and quite high up. Mind, ye look for it."

You may be sure that Marjorie did, and she squeezed Regie's hand very hard when she saw the cross of gas-jets sparkling beneath the star. She had never been inside of a church in her life, and when the great organ pealed out, she climbed up on the seat beside Judge Gray and demanded in a startled and very audible whisper, —

"O, isn't that a *great big* fiddle-pianer!"

Gravity was at discount among the inmates of the pew at that remark. Regie nearly strangled, and even Miss Rachel caught the contagion of Judge Gray's mirthful smile.

All day long Marjorie's imagination was in a most excited state, for Regie had told her that the tightly closed doors of the library concealed a tree whose fruit was of the most amazing description. He had been full of Christmas and its festivities for three days, and had read the story of the German "Kris Kringle" to Marjorie,

beside giving her a highly colored and imaginative picture of Santa Claus. Marjorie had dreamed of him for two nights, and had coaxed Regie to teach her the poem of "The Night before Christmas," which Judge Gray kept quoting, and Christmas morning she stood by the Judge's chair and repeated the whole of it, very much to his surprise and her tutor's satisfaction.

Evening came at last; to impatient Regie and Marjorie the day seemed very long, notwithstanding the Christmas dinner at grandma's, where the table was loaded with delicious edibles, and where they finished the repast with a regular English plum-pudding. At five o'clock the family began to assemble, and there was quite a party of young folks. Mrs. Marston and her three girls, of whom Lily was the eldest; Judge Gray's brother, Mr. Norton Gray, with his four boys and one little fairy daughter of three years; then Mrs. Maxwell, grandma's only surviving daughter, and her children. There were seven of them: Percy, two years older than Regie, a Freshman at Yale and very superb accordingly (that is, at home; when at college he endured a sufficiency of snubbing from those intolerable Sophs); then Clara, just seventeen, and a very pretty girl, looking forward with impatience to next year and "coming out" in society. Mrs. Marston was Clara's high priestess in all things pertaining to fashion, and she had been falling into ecstasies over that lady's lace fan ever since she came down-stairs, appealing to her cousin, Meta Livingston, to know if it was not "perfectly exquisite." Meta, a simple, unaffected child of fifteen (Regie's favorite of all his tribe of cousins), only laughed a little in reply. Her father, Edmund Livingston, was grandma's only son, and Meta herself was an only child.

Marjorie's timidity was holding her in an agony of shame-facedness at the back of Miss Rachel's chair. This party of children and young people were quite overpowering to the child, for the younger members of it stared at her unmercifully, and the boys, after the customary fashion of their kind, collected in a corner of the room. She wondered where Judge Gray could be, — she had not seen him since they came back from dinner. And Regie? Marjorie, with trembling lip, fancied he had forgotten her. But when the library doors were thrown open with a grand flourish by Percy Maxwell and Jerry Gray, somebody lifted Marjorie up suddenly from behind the others.

"There! Did you ever see such a funny tree as that?" said Regie, gayly, putting his arm around her lest she should fall off the chair where he had placed her.

There it stood, the tall graceful tree, reaching nearly up to the ceiling of the room, with its boughs fairly loaded with all manner of parcels, and pretty colored balls and wax tapers to light up the whole. The party of children applauded loudly, and Lily Marston called out, —

"O, let 's begin; I'm sure that lovely doll with the real hair is for me, — is n't it?"

"Hush, Lily," said her mother, as Mr. Norton Gray came forward and began to speak.

"Young ladies and gentlemen," said he, "before we take any presents from the tree I am asked to introduce a celebrated stranger to you who has, after earnest persuasion on Judge Gray's part, been induced to stop here long enough to distribute his pack. He has travelled very many miles since yesterday, if all the stories told of him be true, and he has many more to go to-night to other houses where the children are expecting him as anxiously as you are; so you are requested to ask him no

questions but let him get through with his task as speedily as you can. I hear him knocking at the window now, — enter SANTA CLAUS ! "

Everybody turned simultaneously toward the window, or the balcony, whence the sound proceeded. Mr. Norton Gray let down the sash, and there sprang into the room the queerest, funniest little man you ever saw. He looked exactly like the Santa Claus in the " Night before Christmas ; " his beard was long and white and so was his hair, and plenty of snow and little icicles clung to his clothes. His eyes were so bright and merry, they twinkled and laughed and flashed at the children in such a droll way that every one began to laugh before he pulled his pack open. The pack was quite large, and he seemed to be bent double under it, so that no one could tell what his height really was, for the hump made him appear so short. The first person whom he went to was Clara. Stopping in front of her he made a droll little bow, and rolled in her lap, — a tiny looking-glass ! Such a shout went up from the children ; pretty Clara's vanity was well known, but she took the joke in very good part, and said, " Thanks to your Highness," very pleasantly. Santa Claus took them all in turn, pulled out bonbons and sugar-plums and scattered them over the floor, where the little ones flew for them ; he dropped a pair of skates at Jerry Gray's feet, a game of lotto for little Jimmy Maxwell, and a large box of French bonbons in Meta's lap. But when he came toward Marjorie he paused, gave his head a funny shake, which made an icicle fly off his beard on the floor, and then he turned on his heel and sprang toward the tree. Marjorie, who had been watching him in an ecstasy of amazement and delight, not daring to turn from her post by Regie, saw him detach from a

branch the identical doll with long curls which had been the object of Miss Lily's desires, and suddenly, with a skip and bound, the agile old Santa Claus thrust it into her arms. Marjorie's face of beatific delight was so lovely that Santa Claus was betrayed into a smile, and as the wondering child gazed up into his face, she gave a joyous cry.

"It 's Judge Gray! I know his eyes and his beautiful teeth!"

There was a round of applause, and poor Marjorie, pale and trembling at the sound of her own voice, was whisked up by Santa Claus.

"You demure little rogue! So you found me out, eh, Marjorie? Come, Norton, help me off with my pack," and Judge Gray straightened himself and took off his wig and false beard, and laughed heartily to think that his clever disguise had been penetrated by the quick-witted child. There was a little accompanying thought of pathos, too, and perhaps that was why the Judge retained Marjorie's hand in his while the tree was being stripped. Mrs. Marston noticed it, and was annoyed.

The children ought to have been satisfied, for the gifts that the tree held were beautiful and numerous. Regie had some elegantly bound books from his father and his uncle Livingston, a set of gold studs from Aunt Rachel, and a very handsome seal ring with the family crest cut on it, from his aunt, Mrs. Marston, and from grandma a pair of fur gloves. Clara found a fan sufficiently like Mrs. Marston's to make her fly up to Judge Gray and give him a grateful kiss, and Meta was in quiet rapture over a pair of gold bands from the same kind uncle. Everybody was satisfied except Lily, and the one drop that embittered her cup was the lovely doll with ringlets

which had fallen to Marjorie. It was Regie's gift, bought with the pocket money he had been hoarding, and he was fully repaid when he saw his little playmate's delight.

The children wandered off, after a while, and began playing games, in little knots, the smaller children in one party and the big boys and girls entertaining each other in a more grown up manner. Marjorie curled herself up in a window seat in silent happiness, with her treasures beside her. She had a fine cornucopia and a bunch of white grapes from Aunt Rachel, grandma's three presents, a book in a pretty red cover from Judge Gray, and lastly, Regie's doll. Marjorie thought she would never tire of looking at its blue eyes, and real genuine hair, tied with a bit of blue ribbon. Dolly had on a pretty white dress, trimmed with blue, and a black silk apron, and, — yes, shoes! This discovery was very overpowering indeed, and Marjorie was so taken up with it that she did not notice that the children were gradually drawing near her.

"Le' me 'ook at 'ou dolly," said Patty Gray, edging up with a pretty smile.

"Yes, you may," said Marjorie, smiling back at the winning face. "But be careful; don't let her fall, please."

Emma and Cassie Maxwell, little girls of ten and twelve, came next, and begged for the same privilege, which Marjorie shyly accorded, and then Lily crossed over and joined the group.

"Who gave you the doll?" asked she in rather a rude voice.

"Regie," said Marjorie, all her timidity returning with more painfulness than ever under the gaze of Lily's sharp dark eyes.

"I don't care, I think Regie ought to have given it to me instead of that game. I hate games," said Lily, petulantly.

"Why, ain't you ashamed, Lily Marston!" said her cousin Emma.

"No, I ain't, one bit. And I don't see what Regie wants to give a real beauty of a doll like that to a common Irish girl!"

Lily had spoken rather too loudly in her anger, for a hand came down on her shoulder swiftly, and a hot impetuous voice cried, —

"Lily Marston, you ought to be ashamed of yourself! Marjorie 's more of a lady than *you* are, I can tell you, if she is Irish."

The older members of the company paused in their busy conversation, and Judge Gray spoke across the room, —

"Rex, my boy, what 's that?"

"Why, here 's Lily Marston calling Marjorie names. Aunt Helen, won't you please speak to her. Marjorie is your guest, papa, just as much as any of them, and I don't see why Lily should be rude to her."

"I'm not!" burst in Lily, pale with passion. "Mamma told Grandma Livingston yesterday that she was a common Irish child and that I shouldn't come here while she stayed — there! And you may just take back your old game, Mr. Regie, I don't want it."

"Lily, Lily!" said her mortified mother.

"Lily!" her uncle James's voice was stern enough to make even the angry child pause, — "I am ashamed of you! To speak unkindly to a little orphan child, who has never had a doll in her life; never let me hear you say such a thing again."

"You may go up-stairs and stay until the carriage comes," said her mother, very angry at having her unguarded remark repeated in public. "I hope, James, that you are not vexed with *me?*" lowering her voice, carefully.

"Your aristocratic proclivities again, Helen," said Judge Gray. "Vexed, no, but you see the result of such training for a child."

"I shall punish Lily," said his sister frigidly. "But you are too philanthropic. You don't think of the consequences."

"Nonsense!" and the old, sunny smile told that his momentary anger had passed. "I am not afraid that Regie will be contaminated. Let me help you to some oysters."

Grandma smiled comically as she caught the last remark, and rising, went to look for Marjorie and Regie. She found them sitting on the stairs, Marjorie crying bitterly, with her head buried in the boy's arms.

"Highty tighty!" said grandma, cheerfully, "this will never do. Why, Marjorie, you haven't done anything *wrong*. Never cry, unless for being naughty."

"Am I so very different from other folks?" asked the child, forgetting her timidity in her excitement. "I'm *not* Irish! The McKeons were Irish, but my own mother was not."

"No, I do not believe she was," said grandma, quietly.

She was thinking that this deep feeling, sensitive, proud nature was likely to receive many hard knocks in its battle with the world.

"She had no right to speak so, — no right!" cried Marjorie, the sense of injustice rankling still.

"There, Madge; my dear, darling Madge, you shall

"SHE TURNED, AND SAW MARJORIE."

not shed another tear," said Regie. "If you do, I'll cut off every one of dolly's curls and she'll be like little Bo-peep's sheep."

Marjorie smiled. Regie's comical voice was irresistible.

"Where is all my family?" called Judge Gray from the library door. "Rex, bring that child here. She is to sit on Santa Claus' knee and eat ice-cream; it 's not every one who can eat supper with Santa Claus. What does my little girl say to that?"

And he carried her off and sat down with her between Meta Livingston and Emma. Meta was a lovely little girl, and felt very sorry for Marjorie's mortification, so she talked very pleasantly to her while they were eating, and she and Emma helped Marjorie to undress the doll, and showed her how to put the clothes on again. After that Judge Gray proposed a game of "blind-man's-buff," and offered to be the blind man; and such screaming and laughter and fun as they had it is not possible to describe. But during the game, Mrs. Marston sitting beside grandma in a decidedly moody frame of mind, felt a little hand pull her sleeve, timidly. She turned, and saw Marjorie standing by her chair, her downcast face almost crimson.

"If you please, ma'am," she stammered, terribly alarmed at her own daring, "might I — would you call Lily down again?"

"Why do you ask me?" said Mrs. Marston, very much surprised.

"Because" — gaining a little courage from grandma's kind eyes — "she — she must be sorry to miss the fun down here — and *I* don't mind, ma'am, at all, because I'm not Irish, you know."

It was said with quiet, natural dignity, and Mrs. Marston stared at the blushing face in greater surprise than ever.

"Lily ought not to have spoken so," said she. "Yes, I will send for her since you have asked."

But as Marjorie was going quietly away, grandma drew her toward her and gave her a hearty kiss.

"You are a good child," she said, tears in her bright black eyes. "And God takes care of good, kind, forgiving children, always!"

Miss Lily made her appearance after a while, looking decidedly sulky, but as nobody took any notice of it, the sulkiness passed away after a time, and she joined in the games as blithely as any of them. The children voted this the very best Christmas tree they had ever had, and flocked around Judge Gray for a joyous good-night, and he packed them all into their carriages with a kiss and a funny speech for everybody.

But when Marjorie said her prayers that night, after putting her doll snugly in bed, she smiled happily to herself as she remembered what grandma had said.

CHAPTER V.

MARJORIE'S RED CROSS KNIGHT.

"REGINALD, do you know where Marjorie is?" asked Miss Rachel, coming into the library where Regie sat poring over a pretty tough bit of Greek. "I am going over to see your Aunt Livingston, and I thought Marjorie might like to go with me and see Meta. You know she promised to show her the baby house."

"Marjorie? O, she 's up in my room, aunty. I haven't seen you since dinner," said Regie, tossing down his book with a merry laugh; "I must stop studying long enough to tell you her last funny speech. It 's quite good enough for 'Harper's' or any of the newspapers."

Miss Rachel smiled indulgently. She was growing quite fond of hearing of Marjorie's quaint blunders.

"I was sitting down here," said he, "and I found I wanted my Latin dictionary, so I ran up after it. The little monkey had made a sort of barricade of chairs in one corner of my room, and tied a pillow-case under her chin — she was playing church, you know, — and there she was, mounted upon top of the pile, and when I came tearing in she looked up at me, with the gravest face imaginable. 'O, Rex,' said she, 'I was just coming down after you. I'm the clergyman, you know; *won't you come and growl while I pray?*'"

"What?" asked Miss Rachel, bursting into a laugh.

"Just what she said, aunty; she found she couldn't pray and make responses both," pursued Regie, as plainly

as he could for laughing, "so she wanted me to do the 'growling!' If I don't think that 's the best hit at our indistinct Episcopal responses that I ever heard in my life. Didn't papa just roar when I told him!" and Regie chuckled at the recollection.

"She is certainly the oddest child I ever saw," said Miss Rachel, when she had finished laughing. "As I am rather tired, Reginald, you may go up and call her. Tell her to dress warmly, the day is cold."

Regie rushed up-stairs in his usual headlong fashion, and found Marjorie playing with her doll contentedly in his room. That, by the way, was her place of refuge; Regie always welcomed her, and had so many stories to tell her, and odd nicknacks to show her, that she began to regard his sanctum as a sort of fairy-land. She was quite pleased at the idea of a walk with Miss Rachel and a call upon Meta; and after putting dolly into the easy-chair, she took Regie's hand and ran down to her room, where, as he often did, he took down her cape from the closet nail, and tied her hat strings neatly under her chin.

Marjorie took Miss Rachel's hand and trotted along very contentedly. She was beginning to grow accustomed to city sights and sounds, and they did not frighten or puzzle her as they did at first. She had been at Judge Gray's for what seemed to her a very long time; it was the first of February now, and the scarlet fever at the orphan asylum had prevented her going there before this. But she was to go at the end of the week, and she thought rather soberly, as she walked along through the snow, of a new home and new faces, and tears gathered in her eyes when she remembered how she would miss Regie and Judge Gray. For the Judge had frolicked and played with her almost as much as Regie, and she loved

him with an intense, passionate love which she could feel, but not analyze.

Miss Rachel talked to her kindly, and she began to feel more cheerful as she watched the sleighs dashing by with their lively looking occupants, fast horses, and merry bells. Presently they had a smile and bow from Clara Maxwell, riding with a party of girls, and then they met Grandma Livingston's substantial establishment, with large bay horses, and black and white robes, and old black Pompey on the box.

Grandma spoke to Pompey when she saw Miss Rachel and Marjorie; he turned the horses up to the curb-stone and the sleigh stopped beside them.

"Pretty cold day for little folks to be walking," called out grandma, beckoning to them. "Jump in, both of you; I'll take you where you want to go. Is Mr. Gray using your sleigh, Rachel?"

"One of the horses is sick," said Miss Rachel, accepting the invitation, and helping Marjorie up the step. "We are going to Mr. Edmund Livingston's. Meta wanted me to bring Marjorie to see her."

"I am going to leave a note there," said grandma. "You won't take me out of my way at all. How is Regie? I was quite anxious about that sore throat."

"He never takes any care of himself," said Miss Rachel. "His father doctored him last night, however, and he is much better to-day. There is Helen," as Mrs. Marston's sleigh flew past them. Lily was on the back seat, gayly dressed, as usual; she gave Marjorie a cool nod, but kissed her hand to grandma.

Marjorie liked sleighing, especially on such a wide avenue, where there seemed to be no end to the stream of sleighs, and she was a little sorry to find how quickly they

were at Meta's door. Meta's own sweet face was looking out of the window, and she came running out to the door to meet them.

"Mamma will be very glad to see you, Miss Gray," said she. "You were very kind to bring Marjorie this afternoon. I have been obliged to stay in because of a slight cold; papa is so much afraid of my getting a cough. Mamma, here are two visitors; this is little Marjorie."

Mrs. Livingston was lying on a sofa, and Marjorie thought she was very pretty; but oh, so pale. She had been a great invalid and had not walked across the room for many months, but her voice was very soft and pleasant, and she took Marjorie's hand in her own transparent one, and asked the child several questions, full of kindly interest. Miss Rachel drew up a chair and seated herself close at Mrs. Livingston's side, and Meta taking Marjorie by the hand, went up-stairs.

"How 's Regie?" asked Meta. "I haven't seen him since last Sunday."

"He had a sore throat," said Marjorie, "and he took some black stuff last night; I tasted it, and it was horrid."

"That was obliging of you," said Meta, laughing. "This is my room. Isn't it pretty? Papa got the new carpet and paper, and mamma gave me those pictures ('Night and Morning') for Christmas."

"And *all* those books?" asked Marjorie, standing in admiration before the book-case with its neatly filled shelves. "You must be a *very* smart girl to know all those. I am only at words of three syllables."

"I think you get along very fast. Regie teaches you, doesn't he?"

"Yes, and Judge Gray, and — sometimes — Miss

Rachel. O!" and Marjorie stood transfixed with delight in front of a genuine baby-house.

She had never even imagined anything of the sort. It was over four feet high, and was in fact a complete little house, with all its appointments. There was the kitchen with its stove and dresser all filled with cooking utensils; the pantry, too, with dishes, and a doll dressed as a cook sitting bolt upright in a chair beside the table. There was the parlor, and dining-room, carpeted and furnished, one, in blue and yellow, and the other in red. There was even a tiny piano in the parlor which wound up in some mysterious way, and played two tunes, and long glasses, like the one which had given Marjorie such a fright the first time she saw herself in it at Judge Gray's. On the second floor were three bedrooms, and another hall, with a staircase, leading up to the rooms in the attic; "for the servants," as Meta said. It was a beautiful French plaything, and as Meta had kept it very carefully, nothing had become broken or tarnished. She allowed Marjorie to see every part of it; and they had a merry time overhauling the furniture and pretending that it was time for "house-cleaning."

"There 's Miss Gray calling us," said Meta, at last starting up. "Marjorie, I tell you what I'll do. I'll make a new hat for Seraphina; it 's most time for a spring bonnet you know."

"Will you?" The glad, grateful color flew into Marjorie's face. "What will you make it of?"

"Pink, or blue, whichever you like best."

"Well, pink, please. Her dress is blue"—

"Then I'll make the hat blue and put pink rosebuds on it. Miss Gray, are you tired waiting for us?"

"O, no!" said Miss Rachel; "your mother and I have had a very pleasant talk."

"Why here 's Pompey," said Meta, looking out of the window. "Did you expect the sleigh?"

"No, but your grandmother has been kind enough to send it back for us; come, Marjorie. Good-by, Meta," and Miss Rachel kissed Mrs. Livingston, and her little daughter attended them to the door.

When Marjorie got home after her drive she ran off to find Regie and told him all about her call, and Meta's promise to increase Seraphina's wardrobe. Regie listened kindly, as he always did, and then carried her off to tea, and was particularly attentive to all her little wants during that meal.

The fact was, Regie was feeling a little blue, though he would not have confessed it for the world. His father had told him that afternoon that Marjorie must go to the asylum the next day, and (although Regie knew that it was probably the best plan) he did not like to think how much he would miss her. The boy had such a loving heart, and Marjorie, with her quaint ways and bright speeches, and her utter loneliness, had appealed to him in the tenderest possible way. He did not say much about it, even to his father, but he was very loth to lose her, and he resolved that he would see as much of her while at the asylum as possible.

"Come into the parlor, Madge," whispered he, after tea; "let 's have some music."

"Yes," said she, hesitating. "But — Regie — do you mind waiting a little while for that? You heard what your father said — about to-morrow," — Marjorie's lips began to tremble.

"That you were going to the asylum?" said Regie, hastily. "Yes, I know, but that 's only five blocks off, and I shall see you often. What shall we do, then, instead of the music? Play lotto?"

Marjorie shook her head. "I 'd like to hear more about what you were telling me last night. Don't you remember? about the stars and Satan" —

"Saturn," said Regie, laughing. "So you liked my astronomical lecture, did you? Come along, we'll go up in papa's room, that 's the best view, out of the back windows."

Regie perched himself in a chair, and mounted Marjorie upon the window ledge, and began to talk to her very pleasantly. He was extremely fond of astronomy, and already looked forward to having a telescope for studying the heavens, and he had his father's simple tact in making everything entertaining and intelligible to a child. Marjorie's mind was a quick one, and she listened with eager attention while Regie told her of the Great Bear and his smaller counterpart, and the Polar Star and its uses; how the woodmen and the mariners turned to it for guidance; and then, wandering off, he told her a pretty story about the lost Pleiad. Just then a brilliant star shot swiftly across the heavens and flashed out of sight.

"O! What was that?" cried Marjorie.

"A shooting star. There is a pretty German superstition (that means a belief in signs and wonders), that when a star darts across the sky like that, a soul has gone home to God. You ought to wish on a falling star, Madge — O, quick — there 's another."

"Well," said Regie, after a pause, looking down into the sober little face by his side. "I wished. What did you wish, Madge?"

"That I might find my father," said she, sighing. Regie started, and checked his whistle of amazement.

"What do you know about him?" asked he.

"Nothing!" A large tear rolled slowly down her cheek.

"What made you wish, then?"

"Because — somehow, I don't believe he 's dead. I feel it here," and she laid her hand on her bosom.

"Do you remember him?" asked Regie.

"No. And my mother only a little; the night she died, — but Barney told me about that" —

Regie was intensely interested. He was quite confident that his father had heard nothing of Marjorie's recollections, and if there was any mystery about her he meant to try to fathom it. So, bit by bit, he drew the whole story from Marjorie, as Barney had told it to her; and at last, she untied the little bracelet from its ribbon on her neck and showed it to him.

"I'm so afraid I'll lose it," said she. "Barney told me if I kept it the Holy Virgin would take care of me, but you don't believe in the Holy Virgin, Regie — so I sha'n't!"

Regie smiled. "I don't pray to her," said he. "You are going to be a little Protestant now, and pray to God, 'Our Father,' you know; not to the saints. But, Madge, I'm puzzled to know what to say to you about your bracelet. It might help you to find your father" —

"Would it?" cried she, with a scream of joy.

"I'm not sure, dear," said he more cautiously. "At all events you must not lose it. I tell you what; — I'll take it, and lock it up in my strong box for you until you get to be a big girl, and then we'll search for your father. I mean to set to work and find out who you really are," said the boy, resolutely. Like a young knight of olden time, he wished he could sally forth,

armed *cap-a-pie*, to roam over the world and discover the hidden links of Marjorie's history.

"There was a story written ever so long ago, Marjorie, by a poet named Spenser, about a maiden whom he called the 'faire Una,' and her protector and defender was a certain Red Cross Knight. You remember those pictures I showed you last week of the knights in armor; well, like that, with a red cross on his shield. Don't cry, Madge, darling; I'll be your Red Cross Knight — see if I won't! Only," a sudden boyish blush crossing his handsome, animated face, "don't you tell any one I said so. How the fellows would laugh at me!"

"For taking care of me?" said the plaintive voice beside him.

"No, dear; not exactly. You must try and think, often, about the time you speak of when you were in the room with the queer bird, and see if you cannot recollect more. But come, Madge, we won't think of it any more to-night, or our friends, the stars, either. I'll carry you down-stairs if you like, and we'll have our game of lotto."

Marjorie held up her little face to be kissed, and whispered, "Don't you tell *any one*, Rex, about the bracelet."

Regie promised, and rummaged in his closet until he found a dissected map with a remarkable picture of the story of the old woman who went to market to sell some geese, which he dragged out and took down-stairs to amuse Marjorie. And after that Judge Gray took her on his knee, and told her a story, and then Regie played for half an hour for his father and her, ending with Marjorie's favorite, the beautiful, grand prayer from "Moses in Egypt."

So Marjorie's last evening at Judge Gray's passed away, and when she fell asleep she dreamt that she had found

her father, and that he was a knight in black armor with a huge red cross on his bright shield; and that when she ran up to clasp her arms around his neck, the iron visor fell off, and there was Regie's handsome, mischievous face laughing at her, instead.

CHAPTER VI.

A NEW HOME.

EARLY the next morning, just after her breakfast, grandma ordered her sleigh, and drove over to Judge Gray's. She thought that, under the circumstances, it would be best for her to take Marjorie to the asylum, instead of letting the child go with Miss Gray. She found Marjorie in a corner of the library, beside the fire, very pale, very quiet and sad, with the old mute look of patience written in every line of her face. Regie had bolted his breakfast in great haste and rushed off to a recitation, thereby making his good-by a very hurried one; indeed, he felt it too much to do anything else. Judge Gray was holding court that week, but although he, too, went out directly after breakfast, he found time to take a rosy-cheeked apple and a large sweet orange from the fruit-basket, and put them in Marjorie's pocket with a mischievous laugh, and a quotation from "Mother Goose":

> "Sally McGee, my mammy's maid,
> She stole oranges, I am afraid:
> Some in her pocket, and some in her sleeve, —
> And she stole oranges, I do believe!"

Whereat, Marjorie was fain to smile also, and then the Judge kissed her, pinched her cheek, and told her to "keep her face clean," and hurried away to the court room where, by the way, he was never known to be behind time. Regie, who used to accompany his father there frequently, one day, to his great glee, overheard a lawyer from a neighboring city say to a by-stander, with a shrug of his

shoulders, "No hope of my case being postponed to-day; I see you've got Promptness on the bench."

"All ready, Marjorie?" said grandma, bustling in with such a bright, cheery face that one almost smiled to see it.

"Have you got her clothes ready, Rachel? Come to think of it, you know she will have her gingham frock and apron like all the rest of the children; this dress will be kept for visiting."

"I have put in the underclothes which James wanted me to have made for her," said Miss Rachel. "I did not send that broché shawl which she wore the day James found her. It can be of no use to her now, and so I told her that I would put it away for her. Indeed," lowering her voice, "it is such a fine, pretty one that I cannot account for its being in her possession at all."

"Hum!" said grandma, reflectively. "You are quite right. I will look at it some day when I am not in such a hurry. Come, Marjorie; I guess that Pompey will be cold sitting out there."

Miss Rachel kissed Marjorie very kindly, and went as far as the door with them, and actually stood in it and nodded to them until the sleigh turned the corner. With all her queer, odd, fussy ways, Miss Rachel was a very good woman, and she had taken quite a liking for the little waif.

The orphan asylum so often alluded to, stood in quite a commanding position, on a hill overlooking the city. It was a large brick building, and Marjorie thought she had never seen so many windows before. On the southeast side was a play-ground; grandma showed her where it was, but it was quite empty now, as the children were in the school-room. A tidy looking girl opened the door,

and grandma walked down the long hall into a room at one end of it, while Marjorie came timidly behind her.

"Is that you, Mrs. Livingston?" said a hearty voice. "I didn't expect you quite so early. And this is the little girl? How do you do, my dear? What 's your name?"

Marjorie gave her hand, and ventured to look up in the matron's face as she did so. She thought she had never seen such a large woman. Miss Brooks was very stout as well as very tall, and as she seldom moved from her chair, and walked as little as she could possibly help, her stoutness did by no means decrease with her years. But she had such a good, kind face; Marjorie drew a step nearer to the arm-chair as she met the gaze of the bright black eyes fixed on hers.

"A case for adoption," said Miss Brooks, eying her, and nodding her head emphatically. "*You* won't stay long. Just the kind, Mrs. Livingston; the quiet ones always go off soonest. And this one isn't half as homely as she might be, neither. What 's this in your arms, Marjorie?"

"Seraphina, ma'am," said Marjorie.

"A doll, to be sure, — what a pretty one. I've got such a nice place for her in this drawer; see," and Miss Brooks opened one at her elbow as she spoke.

The prospect of being without Seraphina untied Marjorie's tongue. "O, please ma'am," ventured she, "can't I keep her? She 's all the company I've got."

"You'll have ever so many little girls for company," said Miss Brooks. "And you can have her to play with every Saturday. We don't give the children toys every day, because they have to study (learn to read and write, you know), and then, after lessons, I want them to exercise

in the open air. But I will keep her very carefully, my dear, and sometimes, when you come in my room, I will let you have her, certainly."

Marjorie stood very still, but grandma saw her eyelids quiver.

"Come, come," said she, "Marjorie and I want to go into the school-room."

Miss Brooks led the way, and as they drew near the door, Marjorie heard a confused murmur of voices, and then as it opened, a sudden hush, followed by the rising of all the children as they saw Mrs. Livingston enter. Such an army of blue-coated, gingham-aproned children! An hundred and fifty pairs of eyes turned full upon poor Marjorie, staring as children alone can stare; no wonder she shrank behind portly Miss Brooks and wished that the floor would open and hide her from their scrutiny.

"Good-morning, children," said grandma. "I've brought another little girl here to-day. Sarah," to Miss Brooks, "I think you might put her at the desk with that little girl whom Mrs. Peters got admission for."

"Just as well as not. Come here, Joey."

In answer to Miss Brooks's call, a little girl, somewhat taller than Marjorie, left her desk and walked toward them. She had the reddest possible hair, which being very thick stood out in bushy curls all over her head, but her face was very bright and laughter-loving, and she had a most mischievous pair of black eyes.

"This is Marjorie," said Miss Brooks, as Joey paused in front of them. "She will sit at your desk, and you can show her where your lesson is."

"The children look very well and happy," said grandma, looking down at the rows of little faces. "Now, before I go I want to hear you all sing."

A smile ran around, and there was a dive for song-books.

"Children," said Miss Hannah, the teacher, tapping her desk to call attention. "You had better sing that song which Meta taught you the last time she was here."

They sang very nicely, and in good tune and time, and this pleased grandma. The children always expected to be asked to sing whenever Mrs. Livingston visited them, and tried to do their best as the dear old lady smiled at them, and beat the time with her foot. Marjorie thought it was all very new and strange, and Joey, standing beside her, opened her mouth and sang away in a very shrill, piping voice, nodding her head every minute.

After the singing, grandma went up and talked for a few moments to the teacher, and then, coming back to where Marjorie sat at Joey's desk, she kissed her, and said good-by.

"I shall be up at the monthly meeting next week," said she. "Be a good child, and Regie won't forget to come and see you."

The door closed behind Mrs. Livingston and the matron, leaving Marjorie feeling forlorn enough. Presently, the teacher came down to her side, and questioned her about what she had learned, and put her in a reading and spelling class with Joey. Then she gave Marjorie a copy-book with little up-strokes and down-strokes, very much like pot-hooks, and told her to copy two lines and bring them to her. But before she finished them the scholars had a recess, and Joey banged the lid of her desk with great energy, and invited Marjorie to come out for a game of tag.

Marjorie went, a little unwillingly, and was straightway surrounded by a crowd of girls, chiefly larger than herself. They began to ply her with questions.

"What 's your name?" demanded one.

"Marjorie."

"Marjorie what?" said another.

"Just that — Marjorie," said she, coloring painfully.

"Law! What a funny girl. She hain't got no other name," said the first speaker with a rude laugh. "Didn't you never have any father or mother?"

"You just let her 'lone, Maggie Gorman," said Joey, interposing suddenly. "Mrs. Livingston said I was to take care of her, and t'aint none of your affairs if she 's got one name or two. Let 's play tag; who'll be on my side; hold up your hands, girls."

At it they went with great glee, but Marjorie begged so hard to be allowed to look on from the door-step that Joey left her unmolested.

"Don't you like to play in the snow?" said a little voice at her side, breaking in upon her meditations at last. Marjorie looked up, and saw a boy about her own age, but with a pale face and thin white hands. Looking at him more closely she saw that he was lame.

"Why don't you go snow-balling?" said she, answering one question with another.

"I can't," said he simply, glancing at his lame foot.

"O, I'm so sorry," said Marjorie, involuntarily.

"'Cause I'm lame? O, I don't mind *that;* everybody 's very good to me here. Miss Brooks, I'll tell you what, she 's awful nice. She gave me oranges when I was sick."

"Wouldn't you like one now," said Marjorie, suddenly remembering Judge Gray's gift. "I've got a big one here; can't we come in the house and eat it?"

"If you'd just as lief go halves," said the lame boy, gratefully. "My name 's Willy Blanc — what 's yours?"

"Marjorie," said she, and was relieved to find it

seemed to satisfy her new friend entirely. Willy limped up to the teacher's desk and asked for a knife, and Miss Hannah gave him one with an injunction not to cut his fingers, and then Marjorie and he sat down and ate the orange. He talked away very pleasantly to her, and told her how long he had been at the asylum, and the names of the boys who were good to him, and of the nicest girls. Marjorie liked him.

Recess was not very long, and the orange had just been finished when the children came tramping back, rosy and laughing after their various games. Pretty soon after recess the dinner-bell rang loudly, and they all went into the dining-room and took their places at a long table. There seemed to be good food and plenty of it, but Marjorie could not eat. Joey who sat next to her, and seemed to have taken her quite under her protection, wondered why she did not have more appetite.

"I'll tell you," said she, nodding her head in her queer way which set every curl bobbing up and down ludicrously. "If you've a mind, I'll ask Bridget for some bread and molasses for you, — you're a new girl, and you'll get it. *I* like mush best."

But Marjorie declined the offer, and went back into the school-room with a longing, pining sickness of the heart, which (if that lady could have known it) would have afforded Mrs. Marston the utmost satisfaction, as it supported her theory that "the child was spoiled by the absurd fuss Regie made over her."

The afternoon passed very much as the morning had done in the school-room. Marjorie wrote two more lines in her copy-book, and was praised for her painstaking, and she also read a little, and received her first lesson in arithmetic. Just before tea, as she stood looking out of

the school-room window, the tidy servant whom she had seen on her arrival came behind her and tapped her shoulder.

"I say," said she. "There 's a boy out in the hall by the door to see you. Miss Brooks said I could fetch you, but you mustn't be long, for tea 's ready."

Wondering very much who her visitor could be, Marjorie followed Mary, and there, in the porch twisting his cap, and looking very blushing and merry, stood Regie!

"Couldn't help it, Madge," said he. "It 's against rules to come so soon, but I found some of Betsey's crullers, fresh ones, at granny's, and I just tore up here to bring you some. Miss Brooks said I might — this once!" and he stuffed a fat paper parcel in her apron, gave her a regular bear's hug, and banged out of the door before Marjorie could ask a question, or even say "Thank you."

She went back to the school-room window with a warm, grateful feeling for something more than the crullers, however. Then she beckoned to Joey, and gave two of the cakes to her, and three to Willy Blanc ("one more because he 's lame you know," she explained to Joey); and then consulted her new friend as to the best place to keep the remainder.

"We don't have any places 'cept our desks," said Joey; "but I'll tell you what — we'll ask Miss Hannah. P'raps she'll put 'em away till recess to-morrow; why, Marjorie, you've only eaten one and a half."

"But I saw Regie," stammered Marjorie with the shyness she always experienced in telling her thoughts. "That was just as good as two crullers, every bit — and better!"

"You *are* a queer girl," was Joey's reply. "Come, we'll ask Miss Hannah right off; the bell 'll ring in about one second."

Miss Hannah smiled at Joey's request, and when Marjorie plucked up courage enough to ask her teacher to take one of the cakes, she broke off a piece, and said it was very nice, and asked who made it. Marjorie told her, and Miss Hannah said that anything which came from Mrs. Livingston's was sure to be good, and then took Marjorie to supper.

But the sad, lonely feeling which had been charmed away by Regie's little kindness, returned in full force when Marjorie went to bed. The dormitories, and their many beds, the clatter of voices as the children were undressed, all combined to render her homesick. Poor Marjorie felt as if she could not say her "prayer," and she missed Seraphina very much, for she always carried her doll to bed as regularly as she went herself. Her bed was next to Joey's, but, unfortunately, Maggie Gorman was on the other side, and when she saw tears begin to steal down Marjorie's face, she called her "a great baby," and asked in a mocking voice if she wanted Miss Brooks to come and "cuddle her." Marjorie hadn't the faintest notion what that was, but she turned away and hid her face in her pillow, and tried to lie very still while Joey defended her and made saucy answers to her assailant. The combatants were obliged to retort in whispers, lest their teacher should hear them, and after a few spicy rounds the two voices sank away in sleepy murmurs, and the girls fell asleep. Not so little Marjorie; her sobs ceased after a time, but she lay there gazing in the dark with wide open eyes, thinking sorrowfully. Presently she found that by lying very far over on her pillow she could catch a glimpse of the sky through the window, near the door. The night was clear and the stars shone with the brilliancy which is often seen on a winter's night,

and as she looked up, Marjorie thought of Regie's stories about them, and was quieted.

Miss Brooks, coming in to inspect the dormitory, with a candle in her hand, saw the pathetic gray eyes turn toward her, and walking softly to the bed noticed the tears on their long lashes.

"What's the matter?" said she in a kind whisper, tucking the quilt a little closer.

"Nothing, ma'am — only" — a sob treading on the last word, "Seraphina *is* such a comfort to me, and I'm 'fraid she'll be cold down in your drawer."

Miss Brooks looked at her for a moment in silence. "Well," said she, "children are just as odd as grown folks, for all I see. Some are satisfied if you'll only give 'em enough to eat and drink — take care of their bodies; the other sort want dolls — and hearts. Marjorie," with sudden recollection of the grave eyes regarding her curiously, "if I send Seraphina up to you and let you have her to sleep with you at night, will you promise to bring her to me before breakfast every day, and not ask for her in the day-time? If you'll be a very good girl I will let you do so."

"O, ma'am, won't I?" cried Marjorie, sitting up, and stretching out both hands in her extreme surprise and delight at having her beloved companion restored to her.

Miss Brooks smiled, and raised her finger warningly. "There! you'll wake up the children. Good-night," and the kind woman kissed her and walked away.

In a few minutes Mary brought the doll up-stairs, and having whispered all her joy at seeing her, into Seraphina's patient ears, Marjorie curled down in bed snugly, and forgot her troubles in dream-land.

CHAPTER VII.

MRS. MARSTON ASSISTS FATE.

THE windows were thrown open in Mrs. Marston's elegant little boudoir, and the soft May breeze came stealing in, laden with the breath of flowers and the song of birds. Lying back in her easy-chair sat a lady, with a fair, faded face, and an expression rather peevish and discontented as she talked on in a voice which would have been pleasant, but for its fretful tone. She was very handsomely dressed; the folds of her purple silk lay in a rich mass on the floor, beautiful bracelets clasped her slender wrists, and her hands sparkled with valuable rings.

"You see it 's very hard for me, Helen," said she; "Mr. Wylder does nothing but find fault with Horace from morning until night, though I'm sure the poor boy acts no worse than most boys. All boys are cubs," with a touch of irritation, "and Horace has grown beyond me, long ago."

"Yes?" said Mrs. Marston, in a prudently questioning tone, and remembering that during her late visit at Mrs. Wylder's she had endured martyrdom in various forms from the overgrown, spoiled lad of sixteen, who twisted his easy-going mother around his finger, and obeyed no one.

"It was such a dreadful thing that I lost my little girl," resumed Mrs. Wylder. "She would have been about ten years old now, and such a companion for me. I have always wanted a little girl to dress and pet, and

Mr. Wylder is forever talking about our poor lost Evelyn. I have thought I would adopt a child if I could find one without incumbrances. If one sees a really nice, well-behaved, pretty little girl, in circumstances where an offer of adoption might be accepted, there is always some horrid mother or father whose feelings have to be considered, — and so on! I did start some negotiations once with a Scotch woman in New York (the child was a dear little thing, with lovely gray eyes, — the only color I admire at all); but the mother wanted to come and see her every Saturday night, and, dear me, I could not have endured that, you know." Mrs. Wylder leaned further back in her chair, and applied her jeweled *vinaigrette* to her patrician nose. That the Scotch woman in question might have been influenced by love for her child in making the demand, never entered Mrs. Wylder's calculations.

"How would Mr. Wylder fancy your adopting a child?" asked Mrs. Marston.

"Be delighted, my dear. Didn't I tell you he was always sighing and complaining because Horace is a boy? Indeed, Mr. Wylder is always very good to me; he never stints me as to money, and, for a man, I must do him the justice to say that he makes great allowance for my weak nerves and takes all the burden of housekeeping off my shoulders. You look as if you had an idea for me," catching Mrs. Marston's eye. "Do you know of any child whom you think might suit me?"

"Yes, I do," said Mrs. Marston.

"Why, Helen!" with more animation than she had yet displayed, "you don't mean it? Anybody here?"

"I don't suppose you remember hearing Lily allude to a little girl called Marjorie, who was at Meta Livingston's

yesterday afternoon? She is a child whom my brother, Judge Gray, picked up, with his usual benevolence, and I believe she has not a tie in the world. Old Mrs. Livingston got admittance at the orphan asylum for her last winter, and all the family take the greatest possible interest in her. It would be a fine thing for the child, Louise, to be in your family."

"Thank you," said Mrs. Wylder, looking pleased. "How old is she?"

"About nine or ten; it 's rather difficult to determine her age, for she is remarkably old in some things."

"Just the very age. O, Helen, I must see her. I quite love her already," said Mrs. Wylder, enthusiastically. "Do you think Judge Gray would consent if I implored him to let me have her? And dear old Mrs. Livingston, — I suppose one would have to obtain her consent?"

"Her concurrence, certainly," said Mrs. Marston, secretly elated to find that her seed had taken root, and knowing well that when an idea was firmly fixed in Mrs. Wylder's head it became a whim at very short notice. "But perhaps it would be as well for you to say nothing of your plan just yet, until you have seen Marjorie, and I can speak to my brother. For (it 's so ridiculous, my dear, that I know you will laugh) Reginald is quite bewitched with this child, and I am afraid that he would strongly oppose her leaving here, even if it was to go to your delightful home."

"How old is Reginald Gray?" asked her friend, with a sly smile, and perceiving, with all her silliness, that Mrs. Marston had some ulterior motive.

"Only sixteen," said Mrs. Marston, carelessly. "Just Horace's age, but a very hot-headed, impetuous boy.

And James and his grandma indulge him in this whim; and really I do not believe there has been a single Saturday since Marjorie went to the asylum which she has not spent at my brother's. With you, Louise, a desire to adopt a child is quite a different matter, and on many accounts, I would advise you to do so, but one cannot be too careful with a boy like Reginald. Fancies are so apt to cling to a warm, impassioned nature like his; and although this child is a very nice child — a remarkably nice child," — added she, with a slight qualm of conscience as she remembered Marjorie's behavior to Lily at the Christmas tree, "still, you know, it would be dreadful to have anything follow this childish fondness — you understand?"

Mrs. Wylder gave her an odd, upward glance.

"You are a wise woman, Helen; I wish I had such far-seeing tact. When will it be advisable for me to see the little girl?

"I think I will consult grandma, first," said Mrs. Marston. "I can call there to-morrow morning, and I will try to see James directly afterward. And now, what are you going to wear at Mrs. Clay's dinner to-night?"

Dress, and all its appurtenances, was dear to the soul of Mrs. Wylder, so she plunged eagerly into the topic, and before the day was over had almost forgotten that she knew the real reason of Mrs. Marston's philanthropic desire to settle Marjorie in a luxurious home.

Take it altogether, Marjorie was very well contented with her home at the asylum. Of course, she missed the luxuries of Judge Gray's home, and oftentimes she pined for Regie with strange persistency in so young a child, but she saw him frequently, and good Miss Brooks allowed her to go there and spend Saturday afternoons. The

brightness of those days lasted Marjorie through the whole week, and the things she saw and did while outside the asylum walls were a constant fund of enjoyment to Joey and Willy Blanc. Indeed, Marjorie had done what she could to interest Meta and Regie in her little friends, and Joey had been made happy by a new frock, made by Meta's own hands, while many a delicate bit of cake, or fruit, found their way into Marjorie's pocket as a gift for Willy, from Regie.

For more than a week past, Regie, who was usually the embodiment of rosy, perfect health, had been feeling strangely languid and unlike himself. His head troubled him a great deal; sometimes he would have what he styled "a splitting headache," and again, dizzy turns, when the Greek characters in the book before him would dance a curious waltz together, and the English words bob up and down in a tipsy way which discomfited him sadly. Judge Gray was away upon Circuit, and Miss Rachel was so unaccustomed to watching the boy that she never noticed his paleness, or the deep lines under his eyes. Grandma did, however, and said to him uneasily one day, —

"Regie, you ought to have a spring tonic; you don't look like yourself."

"Don't I, granny?" said he, with his old, merry smile. "My head bothers me, that 's all. We've had some plaguy hard Greek lately; I'll be all right when vacation comes."

"You had better stop and see Dr. Gibbs to-morrow," said grandma, with a troubled face. Regie promised, but a game of cricket came up unexpectedly the next day, and he was so engrossed with that that he forgot all about the doctor. And getting violently heated at cricket, and

walking home in his shirt sleeves, did not improve matters, as he found to his cost.

On the Saturday which Mrs. Marston had alluded to, Meta had sent for Marjorie to spend the afternoon with her, and Regie, being detained with his game of cricket, did not arrive at his uncle's until a much later hour than usual. Lily Marston had come in to call during the afternoon, and Meta had invited her to remain to tea. Lily, rather to Meta's surprise, had accepted the invitation, and Regie was not overpleased when he came in and found her perched up on the window-seat, arrayed in a sweeping silk dress belonging to Meta's mamma, and in which she had been playing at charades with the others.

"What upon earth did you ask her for, Meta?" demanded he, in an irritated tone that was very unusual with him. "A regular old spoil-sport, beside, she always tries to snub Marjorie."

"I couldn't help it, Regie; mamma told me to. She 's been very pleasant this afternoon, and I let her have all the fine lady parts in our charade." Regie laughed.

"That 's just like you — always smoothing people down. I'm afraid I was rude just now, Meta, but Lily and I don't 'gee,' somehow. Well, I'll carry Madge off for the story I promised her after tea.

Regie kept his word, but when he brought Marjorie's chair out on the balcony, and a low stool for himself, his head ached so intolerably that he leaned forward against the railing, and let Marjorie chatter on about the events of the past week at the asylum without saying more than a word or two himself.

"Why, Regie, is anything the matter?" asked Marjorie, at last, noticing his unwonted silence.

"My head aches confoundedly," said he, raising it

from his folded arms. "And all sorts of queer black things dance up and down before my eyes. I guess I have to take a dose of aunt Rachel's physic, — ugh! Thank goodness papa will be home to-night."

"O, dear! You don't believe you're going to be sick?" asked Marjorie with a frightened face.

"Nonsense, Madge. I never was sick in my life. That feels good," as she climbed up on his lap and put her cool little hand on his forehead. "How hot my head is! But I don't feel very warm anywhere else," as a shiver shook him from head to foot.

"You'd better come right into the house, and leave the story till next Saturday," said Marjorie, decidedly, and wondering what ailed him.

"I don't know but you're right," said he, rising unwillingly. "Don't say a word to aunty or Meta. I'll go and play."

Marjorie sat by him listening and applauding as usual, but he only played a short time, ending with her favorite, the "Prayer."

"I'm going to take Marjorie back to the asylum, Aunt Mary," said he, leaving the piano rather abruptly. "And you must excuse me from coming back to finish the evening. Papa is coming home and I know he will want me."

So Marjorie was kissed good-night, and had her pocket filled with the usual dainties for Willy, Joey, and herself, and then she trotted off, her hand in Regie's. It was one of their favorite, moonlight nights, and they went slowly; Regie's head seemed better for a little while. But when they said good-night in the porch, after Regie had rung the bell, some impulse, for which he could never afterwards account, made him lift the slender figure in his arms and say, with a loving kiss and unusual earnest-

ness, "Good-night, Madge, darling. As papa says, 'Don't remember to forget' your old Rex."

Mary opened the door before the confused child could answer, and drawing his cap over his eyes, Regie dashed off down the moonlit hill.

When he reached his home he found that his father had telegraphed that he would not return until the last train, and Miss Rachel had gone to her room with a nervous attack, so Regie stationed himself in the library, and tried to amuse himself with a story in one of the magazines. But it only made him more and more giddy, and he finally threw himself down on the sofa and slept a light, fitful slumber, until his father's latch-key sounded in the door.

"Is that you, papa?" cried he, springing up suddenly, and as Judge Gray entered, he gave a staggering step toward him, felt a curious sensation as if something snapped in his head, and lost all consciousness as his father's arm caught him.

When he came to himself he was lying on his own bed, and his father was bathing his forehead.

"What 's the matter with me?" said he, faintly. "Am I going to be ill? Don't you let them cut off all my hair, papa. If you do it will never curl again, like yours; that 's what the man in the moon told Marjorie and me when we went to call on him last night." And he slipped off into another fainting fit.

When morning came, it found Regie in a burning fever. The doctor looked very grave as he questioned Miss Rachel, and shook his gray head when he heard of the cricket match the day before.

"It may be a case of brain fever," said he, in answer to Judge Gray's question. "But I am inclined

to think it typhoid. We can tell in twenty-four hours. There are a good many cases of it about this spring." He did not add (although he thought it) that the prevailing type was a dangerous one, but gave his prescriptions for the morning and went away, promising to look in at night again.

That same day, Mrs. Marston drove down to see grandma, to lay before her the proposed adoption of Marjorie by Mrs. Wylder. Grandma listened to the plan, and it struck her very favorably.

"It will be an excellent opportunity for the child," said she, "provided your friend does not grow weary of her new idea. I should not like to have Marjorie returned to us after a few months; it would be so bad for the little thing to be hawked about in that way."

"I think that Louise, though rather silly, is a very kind-hearted woman," said Mrs. Marston, with candor. "And there is one thing quite certain: if Marjorie pleases Mr. Wylder she will remain with them all her life. He is 'the power behind the throne,' and I know he has never ceased to lament the loss of their little girl, the only one they ever had. Louise will make a great pet of her" — she paused, afraid lest the idea of spoiling by over-indulgence might prove a point against her.

"Well," said grandma, "you had better take Mrs. Wylder up to the asylum and let her see Marjorie. I will talk to your brother about it, but now that Regie is ill I am afraid he will not have much time to attend to the matter."

"Regie ill?" echoed Mrs. Marston. "Of what, pray? I thought the boy never was sick."

"I am going over by and by," said grandma, very uneasily. "I had a note from Rachel this morning. I

have been worried about that boy for two weeks; he hasn't looked well, and I begged him to go to the doctor's."

"Don't worry about him," said Mrs. Marston, kindly. "I will stop there myself on the way home."

She did so, and found her brother looking somewhat grave and preoccupied. Mrs. Marston talked encouragingly of Regie's fine health and constitution, and then introduced her plan for Marjorie very adroitly, *apropos* to Regie's fondness for his protegé. Judge Gray looked a little doubtful; he had known Mrs. Wylder when she was Louise Catlin, and he was a little skeptical about the wisdom of intrusting a child to her to be reared. On the other hand, he knew her to be an amiably disposed woman, and he did not doubt that Marjorie would enjoy a luxurious home; — but was luxury always the best atmosphere for a little innocent soul? Mrs. Marston, with her usual penetration, read a good deal of this in his speaking face.

"I think it is quite a lucky opening," said she. "To be sure Louise is not overburdened with brains, but Mr. Wylder represents the common-sense of that family."

"Very true, Helen. Yes, I think you may be right. Wylder is a man in whose firmness and integrity I have great confidence. I'll think about it. I wonder what Rex would say?" and a shade came over the father's face as he thought of his boy lying ill in the room above.

"We could all see her pretty often," Mrs. Marston hastened to say, declining to discuss Regie's opinion of her plan. "You run down to New York so frequently, and Regie often accompanies you. I'll not detain you now, James," for the Judge made a motion to rise as he heard footsteps overhead; "let me know to-morrow how Regie is."

Mrs. Marston went home in high spirits. She had been more successful than she had dared to hope, and felt pretty certain that her point was gained. But it would certainly be wise to hasten the affair as much as possible, as there was no telling what adverse influence Regie might exert when he recovered. Mrs. Wylder had received a letter from her husband containing cards for two large parties in New York the following week, and she immediately announced that she must return for them.

"How long do you think it would take that child to get ready to go with me?" asked she that evening while discussing her departure.

"Not more than twenty-four hours," said Mrs. Marston. "I was very successful to-day, Louise. Mrs. Livingston was delighted, and James thought it an excellent opportunity."

"I am enchanted!" cried Mrs. Wylder. "Then you will take me to see the dear little girl to-morrow! I long for her — ah! if by any chance she should have gray eyes."

Marjorie was busy with her copy-book the next day, not dreaming of the turn that Fortune's wheel was taking for her, when Mary made her appearance in the schoolroom, and after a moment's whispering to Miss Hannah, she came over to Marjorie's desk, —

"Miss Brooks wants ye," said she. "And, av ye plase, I'm to take ye up-stairs an' wash ye, and put on a clane apron."

"I'm not dirty," said Marjorie, rather bewildered at this message.

"It 's to see somebody," whispered Joey, nodding her head and looking wise. "Perhaps it 's Miss Meta."

"Thin ye are out there," said Mary, nodding back at her, as she walked Marjorie off. "It 's a strange lady, the loike of which I niver saw, wid silks and velvets and jewelry."

Mary was in such haste that she scrubbed Marjorie's face with very unnecessary vigor, and twitched her hair up and her chin down when she tied on the clean apron, but, notwithstanding, it was a very sweet, lovely looking child who entered Miss Brooks's room a few minutes later.

"Marjorie," said the matron, kindly, "this is a lady from New York whom Mrs. Livingston wanted you to see. Go and shake hands with her, my dear."

Thus admonished, Marjorie advanced, with crimsoning cheeks, and ventured to put the tips of her fingers in the pearl-colored kid extended to her.

"The dear little unsophisticated soul!" cried Mrs. Wylder. "Marjorie, you have just the same colored hair that my little girl had."

"Yes, ma'am," said Marjorie.

"How do you like me? Just look at me, dear; raise your timid little eyes, love, and see if I don't look as if I could be a mother to you."

Marjorie gave her a startled glance. "My mother is dead," she said, slowly raising her beautiful eyes to the lady's face.

"I know that. How would you like to come to New York with me? I live in a large house, and you shall have plenty of dolls and playthings, and go riding with me in my carriage every day."

Marjorie's eyes turned toward Miss Brooks for explanation.

"Mrs. Wylder means that she wants to adopt you," said the matron, bluntly. "That is, to bring you up as her little girl, in the place of one she lost."

"Go away from here? Is it a nice place?" asked Marjorie, looking less timidly at her new patroness.

"Yes," said Miss Brooks. Evidently, the plain-spoken matron did not admire the gushing manner of her visitor.

"Just as nice a place as you can think of," pursued Mrs. Wylder, kissing Marjorie's cheek. "It 's a very much larger city than this. My house is like — well! something like Judge Gray's." She did not like to add that it was, in her estimation, much finer.

"Judge Gray's," said Marjorie, her face growing sober again. "O, I can't go away unless *he* says so. I belong to him; he found me."

"Well, Judge Gray thinks my house would be the very place for you," said Mrs. Wylder, eagerly. Having set her heart upon carrying Marjorie home with her as a pleasant surprise for her husband, she did not mean to be balked in her plan. "You see, I shall love you and pet you as if you were my own; do you not understand?"

But Marjorie's face fell. "And Meta, O — and Regie," — a sob choked her voice. "Ma'am, I don't think I can go."

"You shall have Meta (isn't that Mrs. Livingston's little granddaughter?) to visit you, and Regie too. And Judge Gray often holds court in New York, and he will bring his son with him. Won't you come, Marjorie?" growing plaintive; "I am very lonesome, and I haven't any little girl, you know."

This appeal did more for her cause than any of her coaxing had done. It went straight to Marjorie's warm, loving heart, and, of her own free will, she raised her face to the fair, flushed one beside her and kissed Mrs. Wylder.

"I've been lonesome, too," said she. "But I have

Seraphina to comfort me. I s'pose you want me just the same as I want her?"

"You generally do hit the nail square on the head, Marjorie," said Miss Brooks, laughing. "Seraphina is her doll, Mrs. Wylder. I hope you'll make something better than a doll out of this specimen. She isn't cut after the same pattern as most of 'em, I can tell you. I knew I shouldn't have her long."

Mrs. Wylder did not know what to make of Miss Brooks. Her terse sentences, the odd glimmer of her eye, and the keen glances she gave her, savored somewhat of disrespect, she thought, so she clasped Marjorie in her arms and demanded, —

"It 's all settled then? You will come, my darling?"

"Yes," said Marjorie, with a curious sigh. "That is, if Judge Gray says so — and Regie."

Mrs. Wylder covered her face with kisses, called her "a dear little angel," and brought out a large paper of *bonbons* from her pocket, and finally slipped a very pretty ring with a little sparkling ruby in it off her little finger and tried it on Marjorie's hand. The child colored with delight.

"Is it for me?"

"Yes, love; it fits nicely. I am so glad you have nice slender hands; quite like my own. And your feet," insisting upon looking at them; "when you have a nice, jaunty kid boot, they will look very well. Remember me when you look at the ring, dear; one kiss more — adieu! Miss Brooks, I am so obliged, so indebted, — please have her ready at the time I mentioned. Good-morning," and off floated the lady in a state of beaming satisfaction with everybody. Marjorie watched her as she tripped down the steps where a carriage stood, and a strange feeling of

misgiving filled her heart as she recognized the equipage to be Mrs. Marston's. She always had felt, instinctively, that that lady did not like her, and she turned around to Miss Brooks with a sudden question.

"O, do you believe she'll be good to me?" asked she, trying hard not to cry.

"Good? yes," said Miss Brooks, who, although she had her own private opinion of Mrs. Wylder's silliness, did not doubt that any one accredited by Mrs. Livingston would be a proper person to take Marjorie. "You know what this asylum is for, Marjorie? We keep the girls, teach them how to work, sew, read, and write, and then we get situations for them — sometimes in one way, sometimes in another. It 's very seldom that any lady like Mrs. Wylder cares to adopt a child; they oftener take them to bring up as a maid, or a servant of some kind. And Mrs. Wylder means to be very liberal to you." But Marjorie shook her head.

"Somehow it seems wrong here," said she, laying her hand on her breast. "When will she come for me?"

"Next Saturday." Miss Brooks understood the character of the child before her; it was far better to tell her the whole; she would become reconciled to it sooner.

"Sha'n't I see Meta, nor Judge Gray, nor Regie?" cried she, clasping her hands convulsively.

"Nonsense, my dear. I'm not a heathen, nor they either. Of course you'll see them; you don't think Judge Gray will let you go away without it?"

Actually, Miss Brooks did not dare to add the news of Regie's illness, which Mrs. Wylder had communicated to her. And she felt so sorry for the child, and the anxiety she would be sure to suffer on Regie's account, that she kept her in her room until tea-time, and gave her Seraphina and a Chinese puzzle to play with.

The next day brought Meta to the asylum. She told Miss Brooks that Regie was very ill; the doctor said the fever was of the typhoid form, and Judge Gray hardly left his son day or night. But, laden as he was with this weary load of anxiety, he had taken the pains to send a note to Meta's mamma, asking her to receive Marjorie in her house for the few remaining days before her departure for New York. So Meta had come for Marjorie, and the sober little face brightened wonderfully when the child heard the plan. But when Meta, very cautiously and gradually, told her of Regie's illness, all her amazing self-control gave way, and her little frame shook with such sobs of grief that Meta was frightened. Miss Brooks took Marjorie on her knee, and tried to comfort her.

"There, dear," said the good matron, feelingly; "he 's very sick, but he 's in the hands of a good God. Many people who have this fever get well; don't you think Regie would be sorry to see you cry so?"

"Yes," said Marjorie, and she sat up, obediently, and tried to stop the fast flowing tears.

"And here is Meta, and you are to go and stay with her until you go to New York. I can send your bundle; I suppose you had better put on the white dress that Miss Gray sent you."

Meta said, "Yes," and went away with Marjorie to change her dress, and comfort her. Miss Brooks met them in the hall as they came down.

"Here 's Joey and Willy to bid you good-by," said she. "I shall always be glad to see you, my child. You have been good and obedient ever since you came here. God bless you!" and she kissed Marjorie with hearty feeling.

Joey cried, and Willy rubbed his eyes and nose quite red in his efforts to keep from the contagion of her ex-

ample, while Marjorie promised never to forget them, *never*, but to come back and see them just as soon as ever she could. And then she went down the steps with Meta, and looked back to see Miss Brooks, Joey, and Willy standing in the door, waving their handkerchiefs to her with all their might.

Mrs. Edmund Livingston did all in her power to give Marjorie pleasure during her short stay with Meta. But the child's smiles were rare; she fretted night and day about Regie. It was quite useless to try to keep the daily bulletins about him from her. She watched the door, she waylaid the servants, and she drooped, poor child! as if touched by the shadow of a great sorrow. But the night before she was to start for New York, she was sitting, as usual, in the parlor window which overlooked the front door, when she saw Judge Gray's well-known figure coming up the steps.

"It 's your uncle!" cried she to Meta, with a scream of joy. "O, I *know* Regie must be better." And she flew into the hall, and had her arms about the Judge's neck before Meta herself.

"Why, Marjorie!" The round, clear voice was full of tenderness. "And my little Meta, too! Did you think that you were going off with Mrs. Wylder without my seeing you, Margie?"

"No, indeed," said Marjorie, keeping tight hold of his hand as they walked into the parlor. "How is Regie?"

A shadow passed over his handsome face. "We hope a trifle better. The fever has not yet come to its crisis."

Marjorie startled them all. She put her hands over her face, and gave a moan as if her heart was breaking.

"I can't go — I sha'n't go!" she cried, with wild, sudden passion; "O, don't make me, sir. Indeed, I shall die if I don't hear about him, regular."

The soft hazel eyes regarding her filled with tears. Judge Gray's lips trembled so much that, for a moment, he could not speak. Then he lifted her upon his knee.

"My dear little girl, you shall hear, I promise you." A sharp pang wrung the father's heart as he thought what that news might be. "I know how Regie loves you; I promise you I will send a telegram to Mr. Wylder for you every night."

It was very fortunate that Mrs. Marston was not present to hear this new proof of her brother's affection for his little protegé. She would have congratulated herself still more upon her foresight in disposing of Marjorie.

"Well," said Judge Gray, in a lighter tone, "did Miss Brooks break her heart when you left? Don't you think she should have a bigger heart than the rest of us, she 's such a very big woman? Have the tears all gone? Here 's a book I have brought you, Marjorie. It 's a story that Regie is extremely fond of,—'Robinson Crusoe.' You must learn to read soon, and to write. I think I will send you a little letter, sometime, and I know that Meta and Regie will, often."

Marjorie hugged him in speechless gratitude, and then hugged her pretty red book also; and as Mrs. Livingston came in, accompanied by grandma, the conversation became general, and she slipped off Judge Gray's knee to show Meta her new treasure. He did not stay very long, for he felt uneasy every moment that he was absent from Regie's side; but he kissed Marjorie good-by with warm, fatherly tenderness that sank deep into the child's heart, and, after he had left them, and the ladies went back into the parlor, Marjorie stole away into a dark corner of Meta's room, and there, with her cheek pressed against Seraphina's, cried until she could cry no more.

CHAPTER VIII.

HORACE.

"JOHN," said Mrs. Wylder, in an impatient voice, "I wish the cook would learn to serve my toast hot. Take this down and order more, immediately."

Mr. Wylder looked up from the columns of the "Evening Post." "Don't give Marjorie tea to-night, my dear," said he. "It always affects a child's nerves, and Horace got it quite too early in life."

Horace made an ugly grimace at Marjorie, as she turned her eyes toward him, and muttered something under his breath about "not being a molly-coddle."

The bell rang suddenly and violently, causing Mrs. Wylder to sink back among her cushions with a faint groan, and presently John walked solemnly back and handed his master a yellow envelope upon his silver salver, saying respectfully, —

"Fifteen cents to collect, sir."

A little hand stole into Mr. Wylder's as he took up the envelope, and Marjorie's excited voice said, —

"My telegram! O, what?"

It spoke well for Marjorie's future that her new protector did not wait to pay the messenger before reading the dispatch. He tore it open, then turned to her, smiling, —

"I wish you joy, my dear. Judge Gray says, 'Regie is pronounced out of danger. Very feeble, but will recover. Love to Marjorie.'"

"I *am* so thankful!" ejaculated Mrs. Wylder. "Dear-

est Marjorie has cried every day, I do believe, about that boy, and her eyes will show it for weeks, I fear."

The objectionable tears were running fast down Marjorie's cheeks as Mr. Wylder picked her up on his knee.

"My dear, don't," said he, in a rather awkward voice.

With her usual sensitiveness for others, Marjorie felt that, in some mysterious way, he was pained by her crying, so she wiped her face quietly, and said, —

"I couldn't help it, please, sir. Regie is such a splendid fellow, — and it was hard to come to New York and not see him before I left."

"Marjorie, love," said Mrs. Wylder, "do, pray, remember not to say 'Please, sir.' It sounds so dreadfully like a street beggar; I've spoken to you of it before."

"Yes, ma'am," said Marjorie, the swift blood flying into her face.

"Yes, *mamma*," corrected Mrs. Wylder.

"I'll try to remember, mamma," said Marjorie, submissively. Mr. Wylder pressed her a little closer in his arms. It was a very fair face that lay back against his shoulder. Mrs. Wylder, true to her promise, had been very busy for the past week, since their return, purchasing Marjorie's wardrobe. Her French maid's active fingers had been called into service, and the beautifully fine muslin and embroidery, the blue ribbons for her hair and waist, the tiny string of gold beads at the throat, were all graceful on Marjorie. And it was curious to see how little the child seemed to pride herself upon her fine clothes. She was so absorbed in her anxiety about Regie that everything else was secondary, and she submitted to be pulled about and fitted, and dressed by Fanchon with the same weary, listless air; but she possessed the innate refinement of soul and person which had always been her

special characteristic, and which stamped her unmistakably, without the aid of dress. It was too subtle for Mrs. Wylder to detect, however, but her husband, with all his plain, worldly wisdom, was a keen observer, and the very evening of Marjorie's arrival he uttered a mental thanksgiving that his wife's fickle choice had fallen upon a child who possessed something beside mere prettiness of face and form. As Mrs. Wylder had foreseen, her husband was not at all displeased with the introduction of a little girl into their home. Marjorie liked Mr. Wylder. He was a plain, quiet looking man, very different from his gay, frivolous wife; a man who said very little, but who was well known among his acquaintances as extremely liberal and kindly hearted. The child felt that his near-sighted, pale blue eyes had a look of sincerity and truthfulness, which she did not find in the face of either Mrs. Wylder or Horace.

Horace was a new revelation to Marjorie. Coming, as she did, fresh from her association with Regie, she was inclined to look with deep admiration upon any boy of the same age as her idol, and his mother's glowing description of Horace's beauty had raised her expectations to the highest pitch. As far as regular features, clear, bright complexion, and a tall figure could make beauty, Horace certainly did not fall short of his mother's praises, but the expression of the bold, handsome face was one that Marjorie shrank from. Regie's frank blue eyes, open as the day in their honest clearness, were widely dissimilar from the flashing scornful black ones that watched every movement of poor Marjorie's, until the child would become so painfully embarrassed that tears would rush into her eyes under the unkind scrutiny. Horace Wylder was a boy who had been ruined by his

weak mother's indulgence. He was selfish in the extreme, bullying and cruel to boys younger than himself, and cringing to those whose position he considered superior to his own. If he had not been a very clever, quick-witted boy, his unpopularity would have cost him his place in Mr. Miller's select school; but his scholarship stand was a high one, and the principal liked to display his brilliant pupil upon all public occasions; so Horace kept his stand, and, at the examinations, carried off everything with flying colors, and plenty of bombast. The only thing that could make the boy quail was the stern glance of his father's eye, when he was trying to carry out some piece of deceit. Mr. Wylder had an uneasy feeling, often recurring to his mind, that his son was not a perfectly truthful boy, but as yet he had never been able to detect him in any very flagrant breach of truth, and he was sometimes afraid that, in his suspicion, he did Horace injustice.

Marjorie's arrival was not received with cordiality by Horace. Mrs. Wylder knew by the sullen eyes and lowering brow of her idol, that this new claimant for favor was not an agreeable surprise to him. She had not written to her husband of the plan to adopt Marjorie chiefly because she knew there would be a scene with Horace, and (with her usual habit of evading disagreeables) she purposed to have it over in the form of a surprise. Marjorie, when Horace met them at the station with the carriage, offered her little hand to him, and put up her face to be kissed; but Horace glared at her savagely, and drew back with an exclamation, —

"I knew you'd be up to some dodge or other, mother! What do you want of a girl, bothering round?"

Marjorie, curled up in a corner of the carriage trem-

bling at the rebuff, drew back, and never offered to kiss him again.

Judge Gray had kept his promise. Every evening, Mr. Wylder received a dispatch, containing but a word or two; still, on those words Marjorie's anxious heart fed for a week. No one knew how the child suffered during that time; the quaint, heart-wrung prayers that she uttered day and night for her "dear, beautiful Regie." God knew; and who can say that those innocent appeals were in vain, for was she not one of those little ones of whom the Master said that "in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father."

So it was a very happy little girl who sat on Mr. Wylder's knee while he finished reading his evening paper, and when he laid it down on the table, Marjorie ventured to say, in answer to a kind look from him, —

"How long will it take Regie to get well and strong? Do you believe I could have a letter from him in two weeks?"

"It will be more like two months, my dear," said Mr. Wylder.

Seeing Marjorie's look of disappointment, he added, "I should think your other little friend there — Mr. Livingston's daughter — would let you know about him."

"Meta? Yes, I am sure she will," said Marjorie brightly.

"How is Seraphina to-night?" asked Mr. Wylder, with a smile. Marjorie's affection for her doll had amused him very much.

"Just as well as can be. Fanchon made her a new dress to-day; wasn't Mrs. Wylder — I mean, wasn't mamma — good to let her?"

"What sensibility!" sighed that lady from her arm-

chair. "She can make you another to-morrow, my darling. And that reminds me, Mr. Wylder, have you attended to that advertisement about a daily governess for Marjorie?"

"I called, as you directed, and found a very nice, ladylike person, who gave me the very best references, so I desired her to come here to-morrow and make the final arrangements as to hours, with you. I settled about the salary."

"I don't doubt the person imposed on you," cried Mrs. Wylder. "You should have let me make terms with her."

"I thought it best to do that myself," said Mr. Wylder, quietly. He did not think it necessary to add that he had been too much struck with the young governess's hacking cough not to give her fully the amount she modestly asked: how angry Mrs. Wilder would have been had she known that he voluntarily added five dollars a quarter to the sum named, under the kindly pretext that Marjorie had so much to learn!

"Is my governess nice?" asked Marjorie.

"I think so; she will be kind, at all events. And, by the way, Marjorie, how would Seraphina like it if I gave her a rival in your affections?"

"I don't know, sir," said Marjorie, opening her eyes, and not quite certain what a rival could be.

"As I was walking down town to-day I met a boy who has been at my office several times with a black and tan terrier for sale, and," smiling, as Marjorie's speaking eyes caught the infection of pleasure from his, — "and I thought I knew a little girl who told me she liked dogs."

"O, did you get him?" cried she.

"If you will jump down off my knee and ring the

"'COME HERE, DOGGIE.'"

bell for John, perhaps you'll find out what came in the basket I brought home to-night."

Off flew Marjorie. John appeared, and in his arms sat a funny little dog, with very bright black eyes, the smoothest of hair, and sharp, pointed ears which gave him a most knowing expression.

"Come here, doggie, doggie," said Marjorie, as John set him down on the carpet. Horace gave a shrill whistle, but although the dog heard it, and wagged his tail, he obeyed Marjorie's gentle call, to her great delight.

"I declare, papa," said Horace, sullenly, "you're really too bad. Here I've been teasing for a splendid blood-hound pup this ever so long, and you go and bring home that rat for Marjorie."

"There is some difference between this rat, as you call him, who is a house-dog, and will not annoy your mother, and a hound of the sort you are anxious to have," said his father. "We have no place except the stable to keep a large dog, and moreover, I know that if I did allow you to bring one here he would be in the house half the time. I have told you, Horace, that I do not consider dogs of that sort safe companions; they are very fierce, and I will not have Marjorie frightened."

Horace's face turned pale, and he cast a glance of vindictive spite upon Marjorie and the dog. Fortunately for him, his father did not see it, and Mrs. Wylder was too much occupied in praising the little dog's beauty to notice the cloud that settled down upon her son's face.

"Why, he 's got a collar!" cried Marjorie. "What a pretty red one. And here 's a — I don't know what this is," touching the silver plate on it.

"That 's the place to have his name and residence engraved," said Mrs. Wylder. "What shall we call

him, darling? Spy, Flirt, Rover, — no, none of those suit him. Do you think of any name for him, Marjorie?"

"Why, I don't know," said Marjorie, surveying her new playmate delightedly. "He 's something like Meta's dog, Whiskey. But I don't think Whiskey is a very pretty name, do you? How he holds his head up, just as if he was proud of his new collar, something like Tom Gray when he wore his red neck-tie that Regie made such fun of. O, I know — I'll call him what Regie said Tom was, — 'Dandy.'"

"That 's a very good name," said Mr. Wylder, heartily. "Ask mamma if you can go with Fanchon to-morrow to some jeweler's and have the name put on the collar."

"I'll take you in the carriage," said Mrs. Wylder. "There comes Fanchon for you, my love. Do you wish to have Dandy in your room, or Seraphina? I don't wish you to have both, for you won't go to sleep to-night."

Marjorie hesitated. Dandy frisked, and gave her fingers a gentle lick with his tongue. She caught Mr. Wylder's eye, and blushed deeply.

"I can't give up my dear Seraphina," said she. "Do you think Dandy's feelings would be hurt? Seraphina is the oldest friend; I guess I'll take more comfort with her."

"You don't forget the old friends; right, my little girl," said Mr. Wylder, as she threw her arms around his neck.

"I didn't thank you," whispered she, hiding her face on his shoulder, "but I *do* love you for bringing me such a dear, cunning, little dog. May Fanchon keep him for me?"

"I have given John a basket for him to sleep in; it will stand in the upper hall, and when you open your

door in the morning I expect you will see him waiting for you to go down to breakfast. Good-night, my dear."

Horace sat glowering over his book for some time after Marjorie had gone, and his mother, seeing his displeasure, strove to divert him by introducing topics which she thought would please him. Mr. Wylder went on reading his paper, taking no notice of the boy's sullen looks, until Horace put up his book and addressed him.

"Papa," said he, "I wish you'd give me fifty dollars."

Mr. Wylder raised his head.

"Fifty dollars, Horace? You use money pretty fast, it seems to me, for I gave you twenty-five over your allowance last week, and your quarter is not half over yet."

"I had to subscribe for a present to Mr. Smith, the English teacher, when he went away," said Horace, with an impressive side-glance at his mother, a warning to her not to betray that she had given him ten dollars for that purpose. "And there was a supper that our fellows gave last week, and the poor fellows couldn't come up to the mark, so we rich ones had to make it up to Delmonico, and" —

"Delmonico!" said his father. "I declare, Horace, you are going a little too fast. Have I not forbidden you to get up expensive suppers? Among school-boys it is a most pernicious habit, and will only prepare the way for all sorts of excesses by and by. Well, you have accounted for part of your money, pray what do you need fifty dollars for?"

"Base-ball — and things," said Horace, boldly, meeting his father's eye for half a second, and then looking away.

"I dislike to refuse you," said Mr. Wylder, more kindly, as he saw his wife's beseeching gesture, "but I will not

allow you to run into extravagant habits if I can help it. I think five dollars for the base-ball, and five for the 'things,' must satisfy you this time; there is ten dollars. Do not ask me for more until your allowance is due. Louise," speaking with the decision which Mrs. Wylder knew she must obey on the rare occasions when it was displayed toward her, — "you will understand that I mean what I say, and I request that you will not give Horace anything out of your private purse unless I am first consulted."

Horace took the bank-note extended toward him, muttered something too low for his father to catch, and left the parlor, banging the door behind him.

Mr. Wylder sighed painfully as he resumed his reading, but nothing further was said on the subject by either husband or wife, and Mrs. Wylder finished her novel before she went to bed.

But Horace had no intention of letting the matter rest thus. The next day as his mother was sitting in her room before lunch, he came in, and flung himself down on the sofa, first giving her a kiss. She looked pleased at the unusual tenderness, and asked him if he would go out to drive in the Park with her before dinner.

"Bother! no," said he impatiently. "I've an appointment at three. I say, mother, what made papa so cross last night? Has he been losing anything down town?"

"Mercy! I hope not," ejaculated Mrs. Wylder. "How you frightened me, you sad naughty boy. On the contrary, I heard him say last week that he had been very fortunate in a speculation."

"Then why is he so *con*founded mean as not to let me have that fifty dollars?" cried the dutiful son.

"You have been getting into debt again," said Mrs.

Wylder, a terrified look crossing her face. "You know how very angry your father would be at such a thing. I wish," fretfully, — "I wish you would behave better. Like Regie Gray, for instance."

"Don't hold up that prig to me," said he. "I'm sick of his name. That big-eyed child talks of him from morning till night. What do I care for Reginald Gray? But, mother, pretty little mother," changing his rude tone for a wheedlesome one, "I'm in a horrid scrape, and you'd better give me some of your spare money to help me out of it."

"Who are you in debt to now?" asked she.

"Most of it 's a bill at Carter's. Well," defiantly, as his mother uttered an exclamation of disgust. "I don't smoke any more cigars or drink any more champagne than Cliff De Peyster, whom you're always so precious glad to see me with — there!"

"But, Horace, indeed, I don't dare to give you any of my money this time; you heard what your father said. And, beside, I really have not got more than seventy-five dollars in my purse, and I must pay some of the bills for Marjorie's wardrobe to-day." She spoke with unusual decision. An angry glow rose to Horace's forehead.

"I wish that beggar child was dead and buried before you brought her into the house to spend your time and money on. Can't you give me *anything?* I'm afraid Carter will keep his threat of sending in his account to father unless I pay part of it to-day."

"Dear me! I don't know what to do," cried his mother, helplessly; "I believe there is twenty-five dollars in my desk (it 's part of Fanchon's wages, but I can make it up in some way), and you can have that."

"I want fifty," said Horace, doggedly.

"Then you'll have to want it," said Mrs. Wylder, petulantly, taking out her keys. "I can't give you a cent more than twenty-five, and I ought not to give you that. Take it, quick! here comes Marjorie."

Dandy trotted into the room, followed by his little mistress, and Horace thrust the bills into his vest pocket, scowled at Marjorie as she shrank out of his way, and bestowed a vicious kick on poor Dandy when he frisked playfully up to him.

"Mamma," said Marjorie, in an indignant voice, taking Dandy up in her arms, and trying to stop his whining, "I do think Horace is very unkind! Won't you please ask him to let my dog alone."

"Your dog, Miss Impudence!" echoed Horace, in a sneering tone. "Much business you have with it. Go back to your asylum."

"O, fie!" said his mother as the door slammed behind her model son. "Marjorie, love, he has a headache this morning; don't mind what he says."

But Marjorie drew a mental comparison between Horace and Regie which was by no means complimentary to the former, and resolved to learn to write as soon as possible, in order that she might give Regie a full catalogue of Horace's enormities.

CHAPTER IX.

WHAT BARNEY KEPT.

"A LITTLE more to the left, papa, please; that's nice, thank you," and Regie gave a low sigh of satisfaction as he lay back on his pillows and felt the soft summer air on his pale face.

"You are not too fat, Rex," said Judge Gray, surveying him with a quizzical face, but very tender eyes. "You remind me strongly of the man's horse who lived on a straw a day."

"Only when he got to the single straw he died, papa, and I — didn't!" said Regie with a half tremble in his tone.

"No, thank God!"

Regie heard, though the remark was uttered in a whisper. "You have your old plague yet, papa. Dear me! I wonder how long it'll be before I can run up-stairs with you again."

"One doesn't recover from such an illness as yours in a hurry, Regie. I had a long talk with Dr. Gibbs about you last night, and he recommends my taking you away just as soon as you are strong enough to bear the journey."

"Where?" asked Regie, with something of his old animation in his manner.

"I have not quite decided. The doctor says you must have mountain air, and I am thinking of some quiet place in the White Hills; Conway, for instance. And (as I cannot be with you all the time, on account of the August circuit) grandma thinks that Meta might go with your aunt Rachel and you."

"Meta? That's jolly! O, papa, I could *not* get along with Aunt Rachel alone. She's real good"—Regie hesitated—"but somehow, she always does rub me the wrong way. And I think I'm cross nowadays, and I should miss you, papa." The ready tears filled the blue eyes as his father patted him gently on his chestnut curls.

"Papa," said Regie, after winking violently and swallowing something hard in his throat, "do you think I might write a line or two to Marjorie this week? Meta wrote twice for me, but you see she'll be ever so much pleased to get a note from me direct, and—and—somehow, papa, I have a feeling that Marjorie isn't quite as happy down at Mrs. Wylder's as she might be."

"It's only a feeling, Rex, I imagine, for your aunt Helen tells me that both Mr. and Mrs. Wylder are delighted with her. But I am sorry I let her go while you were ill; if I had not been so anxious about you, my boy, I should have tried to make a different arrangement. And your grandmother seemed to think that it was such a fine chance for Marjorie"—

"To be sure," said Regie, hastily, not wishing his father to regret his decision, and determined not to show how much he felt Marjorie's departure. "It was all right, of course, but I don't fancy aunt Helen's friends much. And Mrs. Wylder is so fussy and fine-ladyish—you know what I mean. I hope Marjorie won't grow up a silly little girl like Lily; you needn't shake your head, papa; you know that Lily only thinks of dress and nonsense."

Just then there was a low tap on the door, and Meta's pleasant face peeped in.

"Sitting up; why, Regie! Uncle James, can he have some grapes? These are the first in our grapery, and

mamma sent him half her bunch. And Miss Rachel said I might stay for half an hour while she went to market."

"You're always welcome," said Regie, with a grateful face.

"How stupid I am," said she, after a moment. "There is somebody waiting to see you, Uncle James — the oddest man. I met him on the steps. 'Are you anything to his Honor, the Judge,' said he, with such a comical bob of his head. I told him you were my uncle, and he added 'Ye're av the same sthock, it 's plain to see in yer purty eyes, Miss. Would ye plase tell Judge Gray its Barney Brian ud be after spaking wid him — from Wynn beyont.'"

Meta gave the droll Irish brogue very cleverly, and Regie laughed, and exclaimed in the same breath, —

"Barney — why, papa, that 's Madge's fiddler, isn't? Poor man, he'll be so disappointed at not seeing her. I wish I could see him — can't I?" Judge Gray shook his head.

"It would excite you too much; why even Meta has brought the color to your cheeks, and I won't let her stay too long. No exciting topics for this fellow, remember," and pinching her blushing face, Judge Gray went down to see Barney.

He found the Irishman standing in the hall, twirling his hat awkwardly in his hands, and evidently feeling out of place.

"So you found me out, Barney? I'm very glad to see you," said Judge Gray, cordially, shaking hands with the man. "Come into my study; how did you get here?"

"I worked part of the way on the railroad, yer Honor, and part of the ways I walked, doing a turn here and there for me supper. And how 's Margie, the darlint? It 's lonesome I was for her all winter."

Judge Gray made Barney take a chair, and then told him, kindly, of Marjorie's different homes since she left Wynn. But poor Barney's face fell when he learned that he had come too late; that Marjorie had gone to live in New York.

"Well, I 'spose yer Honor knows best intirely," said he, at last, "but I'll niver see me little girl again, I fear. Do you think she'd remember me, by and by? — but no, she 's only a bit of a child, sure."

"But a very affectionate one," said Judge Gray, his kindly heart touched by the Irishman's emotion. "No, Barney, she won't forget *you;* I will see that she does not. I have something here that I am sure she would give you if she only knew what a long journey you had taken to see her; isn't that a good likeness?"

While speaking he had opened a drawer in his desk, and he now took out two pictures which he handed to Barney. They were photographs, merely small vignettes, but the artist had caught the peculiar, pathetic glance of the soft gray eyes which was the charm of Marjorie's face, and her very little self looked soberly at Barney from the paper.

"Och! but it 's the very moral av her!" cried he, drawing his hand across his eyes, furtively. "Bless her swate face — she 's the sinsible little sowl."

"One of these she sent to Regie, my son, and the other to me," said Judge Gray. "I think I'll give mine to you, for I am sure Marjorie would want you to have it."

"Is it take yer Honor's? 'Dade, I'd not be robbing you av the same," said Barney, with true Irish politeness. "Not but what I'd be plased, yis, deloighted to have such a purty picture — your Honor knows that."

"I insist upon it," said the Judge, smiling with the

kindliness that was so irresistible and which won its way with high and low, rich and poor. "Marjorie will send me another, when I write her all about your visit. What can I do for you? Are you thinking of going to work here?"

Barney's embarrassment which his host's good breeding had charmed away, returned to him in full force at this question. He thanked his Honor — he was much beholden to him, — but he hardly had any plans. The people beyont, at Saybrooke, would be after missing him; he had nothing but his fiddle, and he had wanted to have a talk with his Honor — and there Barney broke down, in utter confusion.

"Well," said Judge Gray, looking merrily at him, "are you in a bit of a scrape? I hope you haven't been running into the clutches of the law; what 's the matter?"

"Indade it 's nothing av that kind," Barney said warmly. And then gaining courage from the twinkling eyes opposite him, he plunged boldly into it.

"It 's the letters, yer Honor; an' sure, I thought maybe she'd be losing them, it 's such a slip of a girl she is. An I don't know as they tell anything; but the mother, says she, 'Promise me to give it to *him*, an' tell him I tried my best — my very best.' An then she went off into some furrin tongue, and I shook me head, and says I, 'Spake English, ma'am, for I can't understand you,'" —

"Barney," said Judge Gray, in a graver voice, "I wish you would tell me what you are talking about. Do you mean that you have letters in your possession which belonged to Marjorie's mother?"

"It 's just that same," said Barney, with a sigh of relief. "And it 's sorry I am that I didn't give 'em to yer Honor in the first of it. But says I to meself, I 'll not give 'em to Margie — the bracelet was all I gave her."

Bit by bit, in a curious garrulous narrative, Judge Gray succeeded in drawing all that Barney knew from him. It was the same story, in the main, which he had told Marjorie, except in regard to the packet he had kept. He told Judge Gray that just before her death, he had accidentally been left alone with Marjorie's mother for a few minutes, and that her consciousness had been very brief. She took the letters from under the pillow where she had hidden them, and begged him to carry them to "him."

"She called whoever she was spaking av by sorra a name, though I axed her twice would she tell me was it her husband. 'Who but him?' says she. 'He will die, and never know I did my best — my very best;' an' thin, as I'm telling yer Honor, she wint off raving in some language that I don't know, and in a minute more Judy came back, and the purty young thing died, quite aisy."

"What did she look like?" asked Judge Gray.

"Marjorie 's the very moral of her, only the mother was purtier. An' it 's a rale lady she was I'm sure, fur her hands were small and white, an' even in her raving she'd the manner of a born aristocrat, ye mind. Sandy Ferguson, at the tavern beyont, spelled out a bit av those letters, but sure, out av the four two was in a quare tongue; look, yer Honor," and Barney gave the letters into Judge Gray's hand.

One of the letters was written in a bold, manly hand, in English. It began, "My dear Father," and was signed, "Your still affectionate son, George." The two others were in French; one, in the same handwriting as the first, was full of terms of endearment. It was dated "London," and playfully chid her for her impatience, assuring her that the next steamer should carry her positive news of the writer's plans. This again was signed "Thine

own lover, George." The third letter was also written in French, but in a different hand. It was dated at Marseilles, and told, harshly enough, that "la tante" was still implacable and refused to hear aught of "Madeline." "Thou hast chosen thy path," pursued the letter, "and may'st walk therein. We, of thy family disgraced, have no more to do with thee. Go thou with thy husband into the nation of shop-keepers." The signature to this letter had been torn off, as had the heading and address of the fourth letter. The last read: —

"DEAR MADAME, — In answer to yours of the 15th instant we have the honor to reply that the sum of money due you at our bankers has been drawn by your last cheque, and we await orders from America before advancing further funds. Nothing has been heard from Dr. Rodman up to this date. Respectfully yours,

"BARRY & WILLIAMS, *Solicitors*,
"4 *Garden Court, East.*"

Judge Gray read these letters over slowly, and with deepening thoughtfulness. Then he took up the first letter, and reread it with the greatest care.

"MY DEAR FATHER, — I am aware that my marriage has given you the utmost displeasure, but I cannot believe that you really mean what you say in your last letter. I may be a beggar, but I am not a scoundrel, and I could no more leave my helpless wife and child alone in a foreign country and do your bidding than I could commit forgery, or any other capital crime. I ask your forgiveness, humbly; I am willing to accept the meanest place in your employ to gain a livelihood for my dear ones, but I cannot and *will not* accept such terms as your harsh letter offered me. Let me hear

soon, if at all, and believe me your still affectionate son, GEORGE."

"What does your Honor say to 'em?" asked Barney eagerly, as Judge Gray laid down the last paper.

"The information in them is of the most meagre description, Barney. The foreign letters are written in French, but they do not even mention surnames, and prove nothing. The only clew at all is in the address at the bottom of this letter. I will think the matter over carefully, and apply to Messrs. Barry & Williams, in London. But there is no date there to go by; it is a very mysterious and singular case."

"An' can't yer Honor find out Margie's father?" asked Barney, in a disappointed voice.

"I wish I could," said Judge Gray, heartily. "But there is very little to go upon. I think you were quite right not to give Marjorie these letters. I shall not tell the child one word about them, or raise any false hopes. She is in good hands, and I give you my word that I shall always look to her welfare."

"An' bedad! that 's as good as yer Honor's bond any day," said Barney warmly, tears rising in his eyes.

"Thank you," with a smile. "Well, shall I speak a good word for you to anybody?"

"If yer Honor would be so good," said Barney, in an insinuating voice. "If there'd be a porter's place, or a waiter's, in some saloon, loike,—a day place, av you plase, for I'm wanting the nights till meself, on account av the fiddle."

"So you brought that with you," said Judge Gray laughing. "I'll remember, Barney, and if you will call here in two days I will look about and see what I can do.

My son has been very ill and is just recovering from a fever; he wants to see you. Marjorie has often talked of you to him."

"I'd be proud to see the young masther; sure, I've heard Mrs. Merrill talk av him many a time. Many thanks to yer Honor for all favors, more especially the picture of Marjorie; it 's a foine, noble-hearted jauntleman yees is, an' it 's Barney Brian will maintain that same. Good-day, yer Honor; I hope I've not taken up yer morning talking wid the loikes av me."

But after Barney left him, Judge Gray read the letters over for the third time, and having made careful memoranda of the solicitors' address in London, he opened his desk and put the papers safely away in one of the pigeonholes. He would have told Regie the story except that he feared it might prove too romantic and exciting in the boy's present state of health; no, it was best to leave it as it stood until he had written to London and received the answer. So thinking, he locked his desk and walked up-stairs. Meta was sitting on her low stool, reading; and, lying back in his invalid chair, a faint glow of returning health on his pale cheeks, lay Regie fast asleep.

CHAPTER X.

HORACE'S REVENGE.

MRS. WYLDER sat in her boudoir in a state of suppressed excitement. In one hand she held a large feather fan, in the other a handkerchief, which she considered it necessary to apply frequently to her eyes, between the intervals of her directions to Fanchon, who was upon her knees on the floor in front of a large trunk which she was packing.

"My grenadine goes on top, Fanchon; dear me, not the one trimmed with fringe. I said the silk one, — how *can* I go to the house of mourning with fringe and bugles?" demanded Mrs. Wylder pathetically, raising her eyes toward the gilt moulding of the ceiling as if asking advice of somebody lurking in the cornice.

"If madame pleases," said Fanchon, respectfully, "I could remove the fringe in half an hour, and" —

"Half an hour! Is the girl crazy? Did not Mr. Wylder say I must be ready to take the evening boat, and we must allow an hour or more to drive down to the dock. I do think, Fanchon, you have no ideas at all."

"Pardon, madame, but the grenadine of silk is soiled with the coffee that madame spilt on it. I knew madame would not wear *that*, and the bugles will not show under the crape, — or does madame not mean to wear crape save for the funeral?"

"Crape — for my dear sister — of course! And there 's another trial; it 's such horrid mourning to wear, Fanchon. One looks like a cloud of ink."

"But with madame's fair skin and hair she can but look the more — what you call? — ah! interesting. Madame's robe of plain black is ever most becoming," cried Fanchon.

Mrs. Wylder put down her handkerchief. "Well, perhaps I may not look *quite* a fright, but I shall expect you to use your utmost taste on the dress I have ordered. Five folds of crape above the flounce, unless you think that looks too heavy for the season, in which case you will put on three, and pipings. And make some black neckties for Master Horace, and finish that white tucked dress for Miss Marjorie."

"How long will madame be away?" asked Fanchon in a deprecating voice.

"Not more than three days," said Mrs. Wylder sharply. "My feelings are so sensitive; I cannot bear to stay among my grief-stricken family. I leave Miss Marjorie quite in your charge, Fanchon. Do not permit her to go out in the heat of the day, but you may take her out to the Park after five in the afternoon. Andrew has asked permission to go into the country for two days, so the horses will not be used, and you and John and Cook can take care of the house. Give Mr. Horace his meals as usual (but that 's John's business — I'll mention it to him), and do not let Marjorie have an over amount of fruit. There," as the door opened, "finish the packing as soon as you can, Fanchon. Has Miss Thornton gone, my love?"

"Yes, mamma," said Marjorie, laying her armful of books on the sofa. "And she said that her headache was so bad that I might leave my French verb until to-morrow. I thought perhaps I might recite it to Fanchon — O, mamma! are we going away?"

"Your papa and I are going, love, on a very sad journey. We had a telegram announcing the sudden death of my dear sister Maria — Mrs. Fellowes; and we are going up to their place, just back of Poughkeepsie (an elegant country-seat, dear; graperies, and hot-houses, and all that sort of thing, which poor Maria took such pride in, alas!) for the funeral. I shall leave you in Fanchon's charge, and I know you will be a very good little girl."

"How long will you be gone, mamma? Is Horace going?"

"My patience! no, child. Horace has sensitive feelings like myself, and he would only be made unhappy by going into such a house of affliction. To-day is Wednesday; we shall be back on Saturday night, I think, or, at latest, on Sunday morning, by boat."

"Please mamma," said Marjorie, in a timid voice, with a very distrustful face, "will you ask Horace not to tease me while you're gone? I know he will, and there won't be anybody to make him mind."

If Marjorie had known that the petition was overheard by Horace she would probably never have made it; for she had by this time learned that the certain way to induce him to perform an act was to beg him not to do it. Master Horace was at that unlucky moment sitting at the top of the staircase, perched on the banister, eating some preserved limes which he had stolen from the cook's pantry, and as he heard Marjorie's request through the half open door of his mother's room, he chuckled, stuck his tongue in his cheek and his thumb on his nose, and ejaculated mentally, "O, you precious fool! I'll serve you out."

Mrs. Wylder promised, and meant to keep her word, but her mind soon reverted to the dress which Fanchon

had planned for her, and in giving more minute directions about it, and changing her mind four times in regard to the crape trimming, Marjorie's request slipped from her mind. Indeed, if it had not, it is extremely doubtful whether his mother's command would have altered master's Horace's plans. So, in a great bustle and lamentation, Mrs. Wylder got off at last, and Marjorie sat down to her solitary dinner, John standing behind her chair in as solemn state as if his mistress had been looking on. Horace had gone out to dine with Jack Miller, one of his classmates, and it must be said that Marjorie felt his absence was a relief. But John's majesty was so oppressive to her that at last she sent him up-stairs to fetch Dandy and Seraphina, and with the former contentedly at her feet, and the latter in a chair at her side, she finished her dessert in comparative comfort.

The next day Marjorie met Horace at breakfast in fear and trembling. She had a vague feeling that whatever reckoning he meant to visit upon her would descend upon her head now. But Horace, on the contrary, was a shade more affable than usual, and helped Marjorie twice to the best half of the melon before him, which surprised her, for he was famous for attending to No. 1 at all times, and particularly at dinner.

"John," said Horace rising from the table at last, "I want my horse brought around at five to-day, and you may keep some dinner for me. Go over to the stable and tell Disbrowe to send the horse — the one I usually ride. And, by the way, where did Andrew leave the keys of our stable?"

"I have them, sir," said John.

"But the horses are away, you know," said Marjorie.

"I guess I knew that before you did," said Horace.

"You can bring the keys up to my room, John. I'll keep them until my father returns."

The event of Marjorie's day was the arrival of a letter from Regie. Yes, actually from Regie himself, although it was written with a pencil, in rather shaky handwriting, and was hardly more than a note. Marjorie got Miss Thornton to read it for her, and then learned it by heart.

"YOU DEAR LITTLE MADGE, — I've made Meta give me the pencil, for I was bound to write myself this time. I am really getting better, though I am pretty shaky, even yet, and don't have good nights. Papa is going to take me (with Meta and Aunt Rachel) up to a place in the White Mountains, and when I come home I mean to coax him to let me come by way of New York and stop and see you. Be sure and write me often. I liked your printed letter very much. I send a kiss for Seraphina. Don't forget the 'Red Cross Knight,'

"Your affe°. "REGIE."

"Miss Thornton," said Marjorie, with a delighted face, "Don't you think my Regie writes beautiful letters? Do you 'spose I'll ever write one half as nice?"

Miss Thornton smiled. "If you try very hard, Marjorie. Take care of those capital R's — that looks very much like a B."

The afternoon was very hot, quite too warm, Fanchon declared, for Mam'selle or herself to go out to the Park. In fact, Marjorie was not very anxious to go; she had a new story book which Mr. Wylder had given her just before he left, and it was very comfortable to sit in the cool library with Dandy at her feet and play reading aloud to

Seraphina. Fanchon had a toothache, and that, with the heat, made her very cross, so she went away to her own room in the attic and took out a small bottle of chloroform which she kept to use in such emergencies. She was desperately afraid of the stuff, however, but the pain was very great and she took more than usual to soothe the tooth. Poor Fanchon! how bitterly she reproached herself for it afterward.

Dinner time came, and, very much to Marjorie's surprise, Horace made his appearance at the table. She tried to be as pleasant as possible, and (finding that he seemed inclined for conversation) she told him that Miss Thornton was ill, and had proposed to give her a holiday to-morrow.

"I'll tell you what," said Horace, as if suddenly struck with a new thought. "We'll let the servants have a holiday, too, all except Fanchon, and we'll play keeping house."

"What?" said Marjorie, rather startled at this proposition.

"John 's going to Hoboken, and Andrew 's off; there 's only the cook left, and I'll bet you she'd like to go out for a picnic or something. And, if you 're a *very* good girl, I'll take you down to Delmonico's and give you a dinner."

"Would mamma like it?" asked Marjorie. Horace's fit of amiability made her feel uncomfortable, instinctively.

"Why shouldn't she? On second thoughts, I guess I'll not let the cook go. Confound you, you nasty little cur! what do you mean by jumping on me?"

Dandy's dinner was generally given him at dessert, and that being now upon the table he had ventured to remind Horace of his presence. Marjorie jumped out of her

chair, but not in time to arrest the blow, and poor Dandy fled crying to his mistress.

"Let my little dog alone!" cried she, passionately, the color rushing up into her cheeks. "I will speak to papa if you treat Dandy so; he didn't mean any harm; he only wanted his dinner."

"I'd kill him — just as lief as not — only father might give me something worse than a boarding-school to pay for it. And I'll punish you on the spot for your impudence to me, Miss Irish Beggar."

He caught Dandy up in his arms as he spoke, and ran out of the room. Marjorie followed him, calling wildly for her dog, but Horace retreated into the library, and dodged around the table until Marjorie was so giddy that she could hardly stand. Then, taking advantage of her unsteadiness, he evaded her by a skillful leap, and was out of the room in a second, giving a loud laugh of triumph, as he locked the door behind him.

Leaving Marjorie to comfort herself as best she could, Horace proceeded up-stairs, two steps at a time, and deposited Dandy in his closet, giving him a cake to keep him quiet. Then he shut the closet door, and went to the mantel, where he took up the stable keys, and carefully shutting up the outside door of his room, he went down the back stairs. On the way, he looked into John's pantry, where, ordinarily, at this hour, John would be engaged in washing the dinner dishes; but John's gas was turned off, and John himself had slipped in next door for a "quiet cup of tay" with the lady's maid, who was a great friend of his.

"Coast all clear," thought Horace. "Won't I serve her a precious trick!"

Below stairs everything seemed quiet. The cook, like

John, had evidently gone out to see a neighbor and taken the key of the basement door with her. Horace went out through the hall door at the end of the house, and proceeded slowly to the stable. It was about eight o'clock in the evening, and growing darker; the street lamps were being lit, over in Thirty-fourth Street. He opened the stable door. A low sound, between a whine and a bark, greeted him.

"Are you there, Hyder?" said he, feeling his way along inside. He had not dared to bring a lantern. "Poor old fellow! good dog. Want a drink, eh?"

He loosened the chain as he spoke, and a splendid Russian blood-hound bounded upon him with a half-savage, half-kindly bark. It was the dog which Mr. Wylder had refused to let him have, but Jack Miller, Horace's ally, had purchased Hyder, and loaned him to Horace for two days. To do Jack justice, he had no idea that the dog was to be used to torture Marjorie; Horace represented that in the coachman's absence he wanted to keep him in the stable as a protection against burglars.

Whistling softly, he coaxed Hyder into the basement hall. The house was a large one, and beside the kitchen, laundry, and the room where the servants dined, there was a small front room by the door which Mr. Wylder formerly used as a sort of office. It was still partially furnished, and the low book-cases and office-table remained standing there. Horace opened the door of this room, dragged Hyder inside and proceeded to tie him to the leg of the table. The rope attached to his collar was pretty long, and, as the room was small, even when tied to the table, the dog could walk about with comparative ease. It was impossible for Hyder to move the table, strong as he was, for it was fastened to the floor, and Hor

ace nodded his satisfaction as he completed his arrangements. Ordering Hyder to "lie down and watch," he went out, and shut the door behind him.

After calling Horace vainly, Marjorie thought that she had better sit down and wait patiently until John came up to light the gas in the hall, when she could ask him to unlock the door. She did not think Horace would dare to hurt Dandy, and she listened intently to see if she heard him crying. She was dreadfully anxious about him, though she tried to persuade herself that she was not, and it was an absolute relief when, after about half an hour, she heard Horace outside the door.

"Do you want your dog very badly?" said he, in a tantalizing tone. "I've shut him up in a jolly place, and you'll have to go and get him out for yourself."

"Do you mean in the house — a place in the house?" demanded Marjorie, very much in fear that Dandy had been locked up in the stable.

"Yes," said he, opening the door and marching up to her. "He 's down in papa's old office. Ain't you afraid to go down and get him, molly-coddle?"

Marjorie fell into the trap just as he had calculated.

"Afraid? No indeed, I'm not. Poor little dog, he'll cry like everything if he 's shut up by himself. Let go of my hand, Horace; I'll go right away."

Off started Marjorie for the stairs, Horace creeping after her, firing off taunting speeches and making shrill noises which made the child jump. The gas was turned down rather low in the basement hall, and Marjorie fumbled a little with the knob of the office door.

"Here, I'll open it for you," said Horace, coming behind her, and before the child could collect her senses he had pushed her inside and was bolting the door on the outside.

A hard, panting breath, two strange glaring eyes, and the awful sensation that *something* was in the room! One wild scream of agony broke from the terrified Marjorie: —

"Horace! John — O, come! Let me out — O!" — a prolonged shriek.

"How do you like my dog?" called Horace, banging on the door, with a brutal laugh. "Better be civil to him; he hasn't had any dinner and there 's no knowing what he might do."

This was a falsehood, but it answered the purpose. Marjorie beat the door with her little soft hands. "Let me out," prayed the sobbing breath. "I *will* be good; *please* Horace."

"Go and tell of me again, will you?" mimicking her.

"Fanchon! Fanchon!" shrieked the child.

"You may just call till you're blue, Miss. I'm going to leave you for the night, and John and the cook are out. Good-by, Paddy; you and Hyder can settle it between yourselves."

Two hours after (during which time he sat quaking guiltily up-stairs, expecting every moment to see John's indignant face appear) Horace concluded that it might be as well to let his little prisoner out. He was a little curious how the fright would affect her, and felt a cowardly throb of fear lest he should find her in a dead faint on the floor. He opened the door; Hyder sprang out, with a bound that nearly upset him.

"The deuce!" shoutcd Horace. "How did you dare to untie him? Or did he break the rope — yes, by Jove! gnawed it off, I swear. Marjorie, come out!"

No answer. Again the idea of a fainting fit occurred

to him. There was no stir or sound in the room. He took a match from his pocket and lit the gas, stared about — then rubbed his eyes. A breath of air floated across his forehead from the window above the book-case. The room was empty; Marjorie was gone!

CHAPTER XI.

IN EXTREMITY.

FOR some moments after the sound of Horace's retreating footsteps died away, Marjorie lay crouching against the door almost paralyzed with the agony of her terror. The room was sufficiently light, from the street gas, for her to see Hyder as he walked round and round the table, growling occasionally, and turning his fierce eyes toward her. She hardly dared to breathe lest she should enrage the dog, who, she fully believed, would tear her to pieces and make a meal of her, if he was as hungry as Horace said. At last a plan of escape dawned faintly upon her bewildered mind. If she could only get the window open and call a policeman; Regie had told her, once, that if she ever got into any trouble in a city she must go to a policeman. She knew the uniform; there was a nice looking man, with light, curly hair, who walked up and down the street in the day time; perhaps she might make him hear, and get him to take her out. So thinking, she raised herself a little from the floor, to look around and see how she could reach the window.

There were no chairs in the room, and the sofa was quite too low to be of any service. The book-case stood immediately under the window, which was very high, and the lower part of the sash was partly covered by the book-case. Still, Marjorie thought that she might open the window at the top if she could only get to it. As her eyes became gradually accustomed to the dim light,

she saw that there was a small pile of packing boxes standing in the corner, against one end of the book-case; once on top of those, she felt confident that she could climb the distance by swinging herself up by her arms. But the packing cases were perilously near Hyder's promenade-ground; would he spring at her and knock her down if she got within that range?

Slowly, step by step, Marjorie crept along, not daring to take her eyes off Hyder. The dog seemed to be aware that she meditated an escape, for he growled menacingly, and showed his desire to get away from the table by several jumps, and hard tugs at his rope. But she reached the packing boxes at last, and began to climb up them. That was comparatively easy work, and at last, hot and trembling, Marjorie clambered up on the smooth, level top of the book-case. Hyder yelped, lashed his tail, and pulled more savagely than ever at his rope; it was well for the child that she could not see how far the leash had given way. It was but an old one, at the best, which Horace had found in the stable, and had taken instead of the chain. Hyder felt the rope slacken, and redoubled his efforts to break loose, but Marjorie's back was turned to him. She was trying to find the catch of the window and push it back, but, from long disuse the spring was rusty, and it took some time to move it. Then Marjorie began to pull at the sash with all her might; it was very stiff, but at last she had the satisfaction of seeing it move slowly down.

She pushed it, hard, and the air, hot as it was, seemed grateful to her. The room was stifling, and her violent exertion had nearly exhausted her. So, before calling "Police," as she had meant to do, she paused to rest, and the pause was fatal to her. Hyder had broken

his rope, and with a growl he bounded over to the packing cases.

Marjorie looked behind her, and saw the dog's fierce eyes, and heard his panting breath ; she was too terrified to realize that he could come no farther: she gave a frantic scream, tried to raise herself from her half-kneeling position, then lost her balance, suddenly, and fell forward, through the half-opened window, down, down, against the steps. A crash — a blinding pain ; and Marjorie lay still and senseless on the flagging.

Policeman Rooney was on duty that night. The curly-haired policeman, whom Marjorie had seen, was ill, and Tim Rooney had taken his place. Now Tim had been making a visit at the grocery on the corner of Third Avenue, and had partaken largely of "rale home-brewed poteen," and his sight was not reliable, although his walk was steady enough, as he came back down Thirty-fifth Street. There were not many people stirring until he got to Lexington Avenue, and there, only a group of young men smoking and laughing on the corner. Farther along, between Fourth and Madison, he saw two shop girls, and was so taken up in trying to catch a glimpse of the bright black eyes of one of them that he scarcely noticed a ragged old woman who hurried past him, carrying something in her arms. That was an unlucky glass of poteen for you, Tim Rooney ; if you had only known what that old beggar was hiding it would have been worth some hundreds of dollars reward to you, a few days later.

A few seconds after Marjorie's fall, it chanced that a street beggar turned into the little gate, and went down the basement steps. Old Moll, as she called herself, was a beggar by trade, but Thirty-fifth Street was rather out

of her usual range, and being hot and tired, she merely thought she could sit down on the steps and rest, prudently getting out of sight of a passing policeman.

"An' what may that be?" said she to herself, as she saw Marjorie's white dress. "Is it a child? begorra, thin, it 's a dead one. I'll not tech her."

Old Moll was just about turning away, when a gleam of the gas-lamp fell on the string of gold beads on Marjorie's neck. Cupidity and avarice were Moll's strongest passions, except her love for whiskey, and she ventured down the steps again and picked Marjorie up. The child's limbs twitched as Moll touched her; evidently, she was living.

Moll debated a moment what to do. She looked up at the house; it was closed, even the basement door was locked. How the child got there in this state was a question which Moll did not care to investigate; there were the gold beads, and soft, fine clothes, which would sell for a pretty penny at the pawnbroker's, and beside, there was Paddy Rourke who was always wanting children to "adopt." He'd pay her for bringing him one, and if the child was hurt, and died, "sure dead folks tells no tales," thought Moll, "an' there 's the East River quite convanyant."

Marjorie's fate was decided by that recollection. Moll produced an old, ragged shawl from some hidden receptacle about her person, in which she wrapped the senseless form of the child, first taking the precaution to unclasp the beads and put them in her bosom. She was quite secure from observation all this time, as she crouched close by the basement door, under the stone steps which led up to the front door of the mansion. And then she lifted Marjorie's light form in her skinny arms, and went stealthily down towards the East River.

Moll had to stop and rest, and wipe the perspiration off her dirty face several times before she reached the tenement she called hers. It was located in an alley in one of the worst quarters of the city, where pestilence lurked and throve on the garbage of the streets and dirt of the inhabitants; where the landlords crowded more luckless souls into one house than it would seem possible could exist there. Moll's room, in one of these broken-down hovels, was in the fourth story; there was even a flight above that, if anything, more squalid and miserable than the last. Moll toiled up the stairs, swearing under her breath, and giving vent to a torrent of oaths as she stumbled over some one who was lying stretched out on the floor inside her door.

"Keep a civil tongue in yer head, gran," said the girl, rising. "Leave off cursing, this hot night. Not a breath can I get, sure; I belave I'll go into the streets."

"Hold yer gab, Nancy; gi' me a light, till I see what I'm going to do wid this young 'un."

Nancy stumbled across the room, and after a moment's fumbling, lit a tallow dip and came back to the spot where Moll had deposited her burden. The flickering, dim light fell upon Marjorie's little pale face and golden hair; upon a ghastly streak of blood across her forehead.

"Lord have mercy!" cried Nancy, dropping down on her knees beside her. "She looks like Jim — even the very mark he had whin the blow came that killed him. O, my poor boy! — what divil's work is you up to now, eh?"

The last remark was uttered in a savage voice, and she gripped Moll's arm fiercely as she spoke.

"Whist, now," said Moll, in more soothing accents than might have been expected, and glanced half fear-

fully with her bleared eyes into Nancy's excited face. "I'm only doing her good, sure. It 's a fall she had, an' I brought her home, for you to take care of."

"A fall?" said Nancy, suspiciously. "It 's a quare fall, I'm thinking, as would knock her sinsless like that."

"I swear it 's the truth," said Moll, enforcing her remark by a string of curses. "It 's not hurt so bad she is, perhaps; you look an' see."

Nancy had by this time gotten some water in an old tin pan, and was bathing Marjorie's forehead with a rag, very gently and softly. The girl's face wore a more humanized expression, and something like a tear glittered in her eye as she raised her head.

"I don't think she 's kilt; there 's a cut here, as long as me finger, on her head. Hould her, Moll, an' I'll go down for some ice, round the corner, and put it ontil her."

Marjorie moaned, and opened her eyes for a moment, but presently shut them again, and returned to her stupefied state. Nancy went to the old bureau, standing in one corner, and found a few pennies which she had hidden there, and bidding old Moll "take care of the child," she clattered down the rickety stairs in hot haste.

While she was gone, Moll improved her opportunity and hid the gold beads away safely in a hole in her straw bed. Then she took off Marjorie's dress, and her fine embroidered petticoats, and leaving the child in her little chemise and drawers, laid her on the bed. She unlaced her boots (they were bronze kid, and Moll knew she could sell them), and putting them in her apron she stole stealthily down-stairs, leaving Marjorie alone.

Nancy was gone perhaps fifteen minutes, and when she came back, bringing some ice in a bowl, she was accompanied by a singular looking man. "Gentleman Roddy,"

as he was called, had evidently fallen very far from his former position in life. He was held in some esteem by his associates, as a doctor, and (when sober) had been known to cure the different sick people who came under his care in Randall's Alley. He was a man of forty-five, but looked much older, and although his whiskers were brown, his hair was nearly white. He wore it long, and took great pride in his white locks, and they, alone, were sufficient to attract attention from a casual observer. How he lived nobody knew, but as he had never been concerned in any of the burglaries by which his associates gained a precarious livelihood, he was generally supposed to be a receiver of stolen goods, and by his knowledge of the upper walks of life to dispose of them without detection.

"This is the little girl — me dead sister's child," said Nancy, glibly, lifting Marjorie in her arms. "An' it 's a bad fall she got, down the stairs and hurted her head. I was frightened most to death whin I see her laying there; an' says I, 'Moll, do you mind her, an' I'll run for Gentleman Roddy.' It 's lucky I was to run agin ye at the shop."

While she was talking, Nancy was cutting away the soft yellow hair from the cut on Marjorie's head, and now she looked anxiously up into Gentleman Roddy's face to read his opinion.

"A bad cut," said that personage, in a voice which, though thick from liquor, was a refined voice enough. "She 's saved herself by a narrow shave; I'll sew it up." And infinitely to Nancy's surprise, Gentleman Roddy took out a case of well worn surgical instruments, and began to use them with no small degree of skill.

"I shouldn't wonder if that child had a serious fit of

illness," said he, looking at her carefully. "And I don't know how she'll come out of it. It 's a bad flesh wound; her head isn't injured, and very possibly the loss of blood will do her no harm. You just keep ice on her, and come after me to-morrow — if I don't have a fit of del. trem. I'll prescribe for her."

"Couldn't ye kape away from the drink?" said Nancy. "It 's a fine doctor is spoiled in ye, I'm thinking."

A shade crossed the man's face. "None of that, my girl," said he roughly. "I didn't ask your story, and you've no interest in mine."

"I ax your parding, sir," said Nancy, involuntarily.

"No matter," said he, returning to his ordinary tone of easy good-nature. "Your sister's child, eh? That 's rather nice looking linen; is your sister well off?"

Nancy colored, and changed her position uneasily.

"You'd better not let Moll get hold of that garment," said Gentleman Roddy. "You're a good-hearted girl, Nancy. Here 's something for ice," and he put a little money in her hand.

"Thank ye, kindly," said Nancy hoarsely. "I'll take care of her, never fear. She looks like my Jim — poor boy!"

"I never knew you had a child," said he, surveying the agitated face before him.

"'Dade but I had," burst out Nancy. "A pretty, blue-eyed little fellow, only three years old whin — it happened. My man is Moll's grandson, an' he never could abear the sight of the child — I don't know why. An' Jim always got out of his way; he was cute, he was. But one night whin Moll and my man was after a big spree, little Jim come creeping along the floor, an' Moll, she stumbled over him, and" — Nancy's voice sank into

a fierce whisper — "his father tuck up the stool an' hit him a crack across the head wid it. He just laid two days like that," pointing to Marjorie, "and the third day he opened his two blue eyes at me. 'Mammy,' says he — an' died. I'm not rightly in my head sometimes since;" and Nancy looked piteously up into Gentleman Roddy's face.

"Mind you take care of this one," said he, turning away quickly. "I'll be on hand to-morrow."

Nancy, with unusual politeness, opened the door for him, and held the tallow candle above her head as he went down the dark stairs. After he had gone, she came back into the room and sat down by Marjorie's side. Hours after, old Moll came home in a state of maudlin drunkenness, and wept bitterly as she lay prone on the floor, because Nancy "thought more of that brat than she did of her old granny," and, finally, fell into the stupor of intoxication. All night long Nancy sat bathing Marjorie's head and face, with the same strangely gentle hands, and when morning dawned it found her still at her chosen post beside the unconscious child.

CHAPTER XII.

REGIE SPEAKS HIS MIND.

"LOST. — On the evening of August 20, from No. — West Thirty-fifth Street, a little girl about eleven years of age, named Marjorie. Rather small, with fair complexion, gray eyes, and golden hair; was dressed in white, with a blue sash, and a string of gold beads around her neck. A large reward will be paid for any information in regard to her, by John Wylder, Broker, 57 Wall Street."

This advertisement had appeared in all the principal papers in New York, but, although three weeks had slipped away since Marjorie's disappearance, no clew had yet been found to unravel the mystery of her fate. And Mr. Wylder sat in his office down town with a graver and paler face than ever, and consulted the best detectives, in vain; while Mrs. Wylder roamed restlessly around her house and bemoaned "that dear child" to Fanchon, a dozen times a day.

Horace had managed matters very cleverly. After closing the window through which the poor child had fallen, he took Hyder back to the stable and chained him for the night, resolving to return him to Jack Miller very early in the morning. Then he went into the basement, opened the door, and reconnoitered the area and the front steps. But, as Marjorie was already blocks away under old Moll's shawl, of course he discovered no traces of her. Seeing Tim Rooney walking up and down the opposite side of the street, he crossed over and interrogated the

policeman, saying that the little girl must have slipped out while he was up-stairs. But "sorra a gir-rl" had Tim seen, he declared; and Horace, by this time feeling guilty and miserable enough, sneaked back into the house and went to bed.

In the morning he was awakened by loud screams. They proceeded from Fanchon, who had gone into Marjorie's little room, and was terrified to find it empty. The bed had not been slept in, and John said that Mam'selle was not down-stairs when he shut up the house last night, — what had Master Horace done with *la pauvre enfant?* Master Horace flew into a rage at the question. What had he to do with the Irish brat, he'd like to know? Was it not Fanchon's place to look after her, and where had she been last evening? Gallivanting with the cook, no doubt; just wait until papa and mamma came home, and see what they would say to such doings in the house.

Fanchon, with tears and sobs, protested that Mam'selle very seldom had her at night, now; she, the capable, preferred to put herself asleep, — Madame had so directed. And had not she, Fanchon, been without sense because of her horrible malady of the teeth? was she not compelled to resort to medicine dangerous for relief? Never, never again would she do it, — alas! *la pauvre enfant*, the one friend of Fanchon in the *maison*, except Monsieur. It was not like Mam'selle to go thus alone; she would run for ze police, — aye, this moment.

But Horace told her fiercely that he would attend to that part of it, and questioned the two other servants closely as to the last time they had seen Marjorie.

John said that when he was lighting the gas in the hall, he had heard Marjorie call him from the library, but on going to the door he found that she was locked

in — Here John paused and looked at Horace, who turned pale in spite of his efforts to look unconcerned.

"Yes," said Horace, trying to carry off the matter with a bold face, "she was saucy and impudent to me at dinner, and I locked her up awhile as a punishment. The last time I saw her, she was going down the basement stairs to look for Dandy. Now, John, get my breakfast, and after that I'll go out and speak to a policeman."

Fanchon was at her wit's end. She talked the matter over with John and the cook at least a dozen times that morning, but the more they said the less intelligible it grew. The excitable and warm-hearted Frenchwoman had become warmly attached to Marjorie, and she was really in deep distress and anxiety about the child. And although she had sense enough not to relate her suspicions to the other servants, she made up her mind that Master Horace knew more of the cause of Marjorie's disappearance than he chose to admit.

Horace's first move, after his breakfast, was to go around to Jack Miller's and ask him to come for Hyder. Andrew, the coachman, was coming back with the horses that day, and it was necessary to remove the dog before his return, as he might inform Mr. Wylder of his having been in the stable against his orders.

Fate seemed to favor Horace, for Jack came right over and led Hyder away just as Andrew and the horses came up to the stable. But whatever movement Horace might have made in regard to putting Marjorie's disappearance in the hands of the police was frustrated, for, as he came around through the alley, after seeing Jack and Hyder safely off the premises, he saw a carriage draw up in front of the door, from which alighted his father and mother.

What Horace did in this sudden emergency was to rush up to them both, and before his mother could get inside the door, which John was holding open for her, he exclaimed: "O mamma! Marjorie 's been missing ever since last night, and nobody knows where she 's gone."

There ensued a regular scene, just as Horace had intended. Fanchon flew down to her mistress, and began to tell the story of her toothache and the chloroform, and Mrs. Wylder considered that hysterics was the proper thing under the circumstances, so she tottered into the nearest room and went off into a regular turn of her favorite malady. Mr. Wylder vainly endeavored to make himself heard in the Babel, and at last, taking Horace by the shoulder, he walked with him into the library, and shutting the door, demanded what it was all about?

"Why, it 's just that, sir," said Horace, weighing his words, and trembling with fear lest he should be found out. "Marjorie disappeared last night in the most mysterious way. Fanchon supposed she was with me, and I was in my room; and she did not, to my knowledge, come up-stairs after dinner."

"Horace," said his father, fixing his eyes upon him sternly, "what did you have to do with Marjorie's leaving the house? She never goes out alone (your mother forbade it), and she is always obedient; there must be some strange cause for such a singular act on her part."

Horace flinched at the look, but his father's further remarks gave him time to think.

"You are always unjust to me," cried he, passionately. "I don't see what I had to do with it, — it wasn't my place to look after her. She was very saucy to me at dinner, and after dessert I locked her up in the library for half an hour as punishment, and then I came down

and let her out; and the last time I saw her, she was going down the basement stairs looking for Dandy. I suppose she must have gone out of the area door."

Horace spoke boldly, secure in the knowledge that he was telling part of the truth, and forestalling John's story of his having locked Marjorie up. Mr. Wylder's face relaxed its sternness. He took up his hat.

"Then, if that is the whole story, I shall go and inform the police immediately, and offer a large reward for information through the newspapers."

Before he went out, however, Mr. Wylder called all the servants into the library separately. The cook deposed that she had gone out, taking the key of the area door with her, as usual, but leaving the door unlocked, returning home about eleven o'clock, when John admitted her. John said that, after his dinner dishes were washed, he went in next door "for a dish of tea with Mrs. Thornton's maid, sir," and that he left the door shut, of course, but fastened by the night-latch, supposing that Fanchon would be down-stairs and admit him as the cook was out. When he came back at half-past ten, having knocked several times, he supposed that Fanchon had gone to bed, so he rang the door-bell, and Mr. Horace admitted him, and scolded him for being out when the cook was also absent. And that was all John had to say; he heard Miss Marjorie call him from the library, but could not open the door, as Mr. Horace had taken the key away, and he did not see Miss Marjorie after that.

The police officer whom Mr. Wylder brought back with him, having heard all that the servants could tell, asked to look at the basement door. The knob was low, and turned easily, the night-latch, of course, being a fastening from the outside of the door; it was quite possible

that Marjorie could have opened the door without assistance and gone out. The case was extremely mysterious, the detective said, but if the child had only strayed away, she might have been taken to some police station, and, in that case, they would soon recover her. He noted down all the particulars in his memoranda, took an accurate description of Marjorie's personal appearance, and one of her photographs (a similar one to those she had sent Judge Gray), and went away, promising to look in at evening and report.

But three weeks passed away, and no intelligence had been received of little Marjorie. Every measure that could be taken toward her discovery had been tried, but her fate remained a mystery. They had hoped to trace her through the gold beads, but no such article had been found at any of the numerous establishments where professional thieves dispose of their plunder. The detectives' theory was that the child had been kidnapped and probably carried away to some other city, and they rested their hopes of finding her upon the large reward that Mr. Wylder had offered.

Mr. Wylder after a fortnight's search for the missing child, had thought it but right to inform Judge Gray of all the circumstances of the case, which he did in a very feeling letter, telling how Marjorie had endeared herself to him, and how lonely his home was without the presence of one that he had hoped would be as a daughter to him in place of the one he had lost. Judge Gray, at the time the letter reached him, was spending a few days among the White Mountains at the little village where Regie had been gaining health and strength for the past six weeks, and Mr. Wylder's letter came with a package of others, one of which concerned Marjorie.

Judge Gray was sitting with Regie when the mail came in, and thinking that perhaps Mr. Wylder's letter contained an inclosure from Marjorie, he opened it first. An exclamation of surprise and sorrow escaped him as he ran his eye over its contents.

"What is it, papa?" asked Regie, raising his eyes from his book.

"What a terrible thing! I have a letter from Mr. Wylder about Marjorie, poor child;—read it yourself and see what he says."

Regie seized the letter, read it over hastily, then turned back and read it again, as if he could hardly believe his eyes, and finally, looking up at his father's face, and seeing only sorrow and pity written there, he dropped his head on his folded arms, and with all his manliness, sobbed aloud.

"Don't give up, my boy," said Judge Gray, tears standing in his own bright eyes. "I hope that Mr. Wylder is too desponding, and that we may yet see the child, all safe, in New York."

"But just think of it," said Regie, in a husky voice. "She may be with bad people who will treat her cruelly —beat her, as that Judy did. My poor, loving, little Madge!" and down went his head again.

"I'll tell you what, papa," said he, after a few moments; "there 's no use of my staying here any longer. I am a great deal stronger, and if you are going down to New York — don't say a word, papa, I see it in your face — if you're going, why you can just take me with you, and let Meta go home with Aunt Rachel."

Judge Gray looked at the pleading, animated face reflectingly before he answered. Rex was almost himself again, the doctor said, and the weather was reasonably

cool for September; he could go to Boston, and from there by easy stages to New York, taking Rex home by boat; the boy would fret and worry himself terribly if left with Aunt Rachel, and his father never liked to be absent without him when he could have his society.

"Very well," said he kindly; "if you will keep early hours and try not to get excited and hurt yourself, I will consent. But before we make arrangements for leaving, let me read my letters, and you can run down and tell Meta and Aunt Rachel about poor Marjorie."

Regie went, and Judge Gray unfolded his packet of letters, and began to read them. The last of all was a foreign letter, and as Judge Gray turned to the signature he found that it was "Barry & Williams, Solicitors."

"DEAR SIR, — We have delayed answering yours of the 21st of May on account of the absence of our senior partner, who would be better informed as to the matter of former clients than we are. Having handed your copy of our note, signed 'Barry & Williams,' to him, he looked over some old memoranda, and replies as follows: —

"The only Dr. Rodman of whom he has any recollection was a gentleman who forwarded money drafts for Mrs. M. Hervé, a French lady, whose address at that time was in the Strand — Mr. Barry is unable to say what number; the paper containing it has probably been destroyed. The drafts were upon the banking house of Messrs. Morgan & Co., and were for amounts not exceeding fifty pounds.

"Dr. Rodman's address at that time was 'Care Clive Bros., Importers, 34 John Street, New York.' Of Mrs. Hervé we can give you no information, except that during the past year we received a communication from

Marseilles, France, asking for her address, to which we returned the above answer. That letter was signed 'Armand Hervé,' and spoke of this lady as the writer's niece.

"Regretting our inability to afford you more accurate information, we have the honor to remain

"Your obt. servants,

"BARRY & WILLIAMS."

Judge Gray made a note of the address of Clive Bros., resolving to call there while in New York, and then he went down to join Regie.

That night, as he sat alone with Regie in his own room, Judge Gray told him Barney's errand, and showed him the letter which Barry & Williams had written. Regie was intensely interested.

"Why, papa, it looks as if we might find out something about Marjorie, after all. She told me all that story, herself, and I've got the little bracelet at home in my strong box. 'M. H.' — why! it *must* be her mother's initials, don't you see? Those Englishmen say her name was Mrs. Hervé — dear Madge, how glad she'll be to prove she isn't Irish!"

Judge Gray was glad to see that his interest in finding out Marjorie's parentage had made Regie partially forgetful of the child's disappearance, and he sat up half an hour later talking over the subject, and entering strongly into Regie's warm partisanship. Though it must be confessed that the more Judge Gray reflected upon the strange circumstances of Marjorie's fate, the less probability he saw of finding her; are there not, alas! too many cases of disappearance on record whose mystery has never been solved?

The easy stages by which they travelled to New York seemed very long to Regie, but his father evidently knew far better than he how fictitious his strength was, for when they arrived at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, he was obliged to go to his room and rest before dinner, Judge Gray promising to take him to the Wylders' in the evening.

In the gentleman's reading room (where Judge Gray went, leaving Regie to take his nap quietly) he found a brother Judge, named Ransom, whom he had not seen for some years, and was glad to meet again. Judge Ransom was an old resident of New York, and it occurred to Judge Gray that he might be able to give him some information as to the firm of Clive Bros. So, presently, he asked the question.

"Yes," Judge Ransom said, "I know the name, though not the gentlemen, personally. It 's a very wealthy importing house, and they have branches abroad, in Lyons, I think, or Marseilles. The old sign used to be Selden Clive & Co. I remember old Mr. Clive well; it seems to me I have heard that he had a paralytic stroke and went away from New York to his country-place — where, I don't know. He was very eccentric; the business is now carried on by his sons."

A gentleman who was sitting next them laid down his newspaper, and addressed Judge Ransom, politely.

"If your friend desires any information in regard to the firm of Clive Bros., I shall be happy to afford it. Selden Clive is my father; I am senior partner, and the head of the Philadelphia branch of the business."

Judge Gray shook hands with Mr. Clive, and proceeded to inquire whether he could give him any information of a Dr. Rodman, who (he could not give the

date, owing to imperfect memoranda, but it was probably some six or eight years since) had at one time sent drafts to England in the care of the firm.

"Rodman?" said Mr. Clive. "Rodman? stay, I do remember him. He was a dissipated fellow, and lost quite a good practice through his bad habits, and if I recollect rightly, my brother employed him as book-keeper for a short time. The reason for his so doing" — Mr. Clive hesitated, and a cloud passed over his face — "was a family one. He had been a college friend of my youngest brother;" he paused, rather abruptly, almost as if he had been about to add something more, and stopped short.

"Could you give me Dr. Rodman's present address?" asked Judge Gray.

"I cannot. I remember that the cause of his leaving was a drunken frolic, and rather a disgraceful one, too. It came to my father's ears, and he was very angry, although perhaps there were other causes for his disliking Rodman. I can make inquiries of my brother, however, and will do so with pleasure; but I feel quite confident that we have lost sight of the man, if, indeed, he has not drank himself to death by this time."

Judge Gray thanked him, and presented him with his card, and then the three gentlemen had a pleasant conversation upon other topics, which lasted until dinner time.

Mrs. Wylder was sitting in her parlor when Judge Gray and Regie were announced that evening, and she met them with a distressed face.

"O, Judge Gray, I am almost afraid to see you — and you, Master Reginald. That dear child! just when I had grown to love her, and Mr. Wylder was so attached

to her. He has actually grown thin with his anxiety and worry for the last three weeks, and I have not been equal to going to Newport as I intended. It 's quite like a death in the house," and Mrs. Wylder raised her black-bordered handkerchief to her eyes, and sobbed nervously.

"Have you heard nothing of Marjorie, then?" asked Judge Gray. Regie turned pale at the answer.

"No, nothing. It is so mysterious, and that makes it the more painful. For myself, I think she is dead," said Mrs. Wylder, in a tragic whisper.

"My dear madam, pray be careful," said Judge Gray, in an undertone, glancing anxiously toward Regie, as his unspoken fear was thus put into words. "Is your husband at home?"

Mrs. Wylder said that she believed he was, and rang the bell for John, who brought back a message that his master would like to see Judge Gray in the library.

Regie cast an imploring glance at his father, not wishing to be left to Mrs. Wylder's tender mercies, but thinking that Mr. Wylder might want to consult him privately, Judge Gray gave a negative shake of the head and followed John.

Mrs. Wylder talked on; Regie had never thought her so tiresome before, and she persisted in talking of Marjorie in a way that was like touching a raw nerve, to him. Getting warmed up with her subject, the lady finally insisted upon Regie's accompanying her up-stairs to see Marjorie's room. Everything stood just as the child had left it, and tears rushed into Regie's eyes as he saw Seraphina in the arm-chair, and he all but turned his back on Mrs. Wylder to prevent her seeing his emotion.

"I think Horace found a bit of paper in the library which was the beginning of a letter to you," said Mrs. Wylder, as they went down-stairs again. "He must give it to you — O, there he is now," as the hall door opened and Horace came in. "My son, this is Mr. Reginald Gray."

Regie hesitated half a second before offering his hand, which Horace instinctively perceived, and registered against him, accordingly.

"How are you, Gray?" said he, carelessly. "It 's a pretty warm evening for September, is it not?"

"I've been showing him Marjorie's room," said his mother, "and I wish you would give Reginald that paper you had yesterday."

"He 's welcome to it," said Horace, leaving his mother, and leading the way into the library. "That is, if you care anything for such rubbish. Mother always makes such a scene."

Regie did not admire the contemptuous tone, so he said, rather indignantly, "It is no wonder she feels very badly about Marjorie — such a lovely little girl as she is."

"Ho!" said Horace, "I couldn't see much 'lovely' about her. It 's dreadful business, of course," recollecting that he ought to express some regret, "but she'll turn up yet, never fear. Here 's the paper."

Regie took it. It was a scrap of her copy-book, with two lines in odd, half printed letters: —

"dear Regie, i got your Splendid letter. i Love you with all my Hart. do come Soon." —

Regie's lips trembled; he took out his note-book and put the scrap carefully within it. Horace watched him with a sneering smile.

"Well, I vow! I don't understand that."

"What?" said Regie, quietly.

"Such a fuss over that saucy child." Horace, had determined to "take it out of Gray," by saying what he thought, and the perfectly cool face before him gave no warning of the electricity beneath Regie's calmness, so he went on boldly. "Yes, I call her a saucy young one. She was impudent enough to me that night before I locked her up."

"Locked her up? Where?" demanded Regie. Mr. Wylder had tried to shield his son so far as not to mention that fact.

"Why, in here — that 's where I guess she wrote that precious paper. Anyway, I found it on the floor the next day, just where you are standing. You never saw such a house as we've had for the last three weeks; mother crying, and that French maid making a fool of herself, and father having policemen here at all hours of the day, and looking solemn and sour enough. And what 's it all about?" with a scornful laugh; "just a dirty little Irish beggar picked up" —

Regie made one rapid step forward, and before Horace could collect himself, he was being shaken by the collar violently, and a pair of beautiful blue eyes were fairly blazing at him.

"Don't you dare say that, you pitiful sneak!" cried Regie, pounding him with all his might. "I'll punish you for locking her up — there! there! *there!*"

Fanchon, passing through the hall, heard Horace howl, and looked on with perfect delight to see the young tyrant receive his beating from "ce beau Monsieur," while Mr. Wylder and Judge Gray came hastily across from the drawing room, to find out what could be the matter.

"Regie!" said his father's astonished voice.

"Yes, sir," said that young gentleman, giving Horace a final kick, and dropping into the nearest chair, his momentary strength vanishing. "I just gave it to him, Mr. Wylder, as you'd give it him your own self if he talked that way about Marjorie. If she 's ever found again she'll not come back into this house to be bullied by you, you abominable cad!" added Regie, quite beside himself. And then, as Horace scrambled up and flew toward him, Regie's head fell back suddenly, and he fainted away.

Fanchon, who had been listening outside the door, came immediately in answer to her master's call, and laid Regie on the sofa, and brought salts, and brandy, and everything she could lay her hands on as a restorative. The faintness did not last very long, and when Regie felt able to sit up, his eyes turned to his father.

"I couldn't help it, papa," said he.

Mr. Wylder, who had been talking to Horace in a low voice, at the other end of the room, answered him.

"You are quite right," said he. "If Horace had spoken to me as he did to you I should have reproved him severely. I am very sorry for it, Reginald; I loved little Marjorie almost as well as you did, dear boy."

Regie put his hand on Mr. Wylder's arm, affectionately. "Do you think we'll ever find her, sir? I'm sorry I said that about her coming back here."

"The detectives give me very little encouragement," said Mr. Wylder, sadly. "But whatever I hear, you shall have. Must you go, Judge Gray? Bring this boy of yours down again, and whenever you come I shall always be glad to have you stay with us, and so will Louise. Can't you come and dine to-morrow?"

But Judge Gray said that it would be impossible, as he must take the boat next day; Regie needed the rest and quiet of home after all this excitement.

Horace had made his escape out of the room, and when Judge Gray and Regie got into their carriage after saying good-night, Fanchon found Regie's glove in the hall, and ran down to the carriage door with it.

"Mam'selle have talked of you so very often," whispered the impetuous Frenchwoman. "She say, always, 'My dear Regie' — yes, many times. Monsieur, I make you my compliments for ze beating to master Horace — he one very bad boy!"

Regie could hardly help laughing as he thanked her, and he slipped a little money in her hand as they drove off.

"I suppose it was rather awful," said Regie to his father, after they had returned to the hotel, and he was getting ready for bed, feeling quite worn out. "I suppose it was rather awful to give Horace Wylder a licking in his own house, but if you'd heard him — the way he spoke, I mean — you would have boiled over: yes, indeed. And they may say what they like, papa; *I* believe I shall see dear little Madge again some day. I have the queerest feeling about her," Regie's boyish blush came up to his face, although it was too dark for his father to see it. "I seem to *know* that I'll find her, all myself, and find out her parentage, too. I promised her I would, when I'm a man, and that won't be so very long after I'm through college."

"Go to sleep, Rex," said his father, smiling quietly.

"Yes, sir," and there was a silence for some moments.

"Any way," burst out Regie, afresh, "we can put advertisements in our papers, and" — very sleepily, "I'm just as glad as I can be that — I — spoke my mind to Horace!"

CHAPTER XIII.

MARJORIE MEETS A GOOD SAMARITAN.

SEPTEMBER passed, and October, with its cool, clear days had come around before Marjorie was able to leave old Moll's attic. How the child lived was a miracle; had it not been for Nancy's devoted and untiring care she would probably have died. And as it was, she had much to struggle against. The wound on her head was perhaps the least of it; she had a terrible fever, and was either raving in delirium, or senseless and stupefied most of the time. Gentleman Roddy had the sense to let the fever take its course, only giving her very simple remedies, and that was her salvation. But poor Nancy had her hands full, as the phrase goes, between old Moll and "her man Jim." She could generally contrive to keep Marjorie quiet, if they were out of the way, but whenever the pair had a drunken carouse (which occurred as often as the state of their finances would permit) and came home quarreling and swearing at each other, Marjorie would be roused to a perfect frenzy.

Old Moll had not dared, as yet, to dispose of the gold beads; if she had, Marjorie would probably have been traced by the detectives. And as Moll could not read, and never saw a newspaper, her cupidity was not aroused by the knowledge of the rewards offered for Marjorie. It was commonly supposed by the inmates of the house (those of them who cared enough on the subject to make inquiries) that the sick child was a niece of Nancy's, as she had once told Gentleman Roddy. Nancy had been

obliged to dispose of Marjorie's white dress, to obtain a little money, all of which she faithfully expended upon her patient, but as she first ripped off the embroidered bands, to be sold separately, it had not reached the notice of the police.

But her fever had made one great change in Marjorie; she had lost all recollection of the past few years as if they had never been. Even her own name, Marjorie, had gone from her, and although dimly, as in a dream, she seemed to know that Mary (the name which Nancy gave her) was not hers, she could not remember what she ought to be called. Her memory went back further still, and she talked dreamily of "mamma," and how cross the old gentleman with white hair had been to her.

"You know," she said one day, whispering to Nancy,— "you know he gave me a push, and I fell down. That 's why my head feels so queer; when I get well can I go back to my own mother?"

Nancy promised, and soothed the child until she fell off into a quiet slumber.

Very cautiously, at different times, Nancy tried to find out where Marjorie could have come from. Old Moll, besotted as she was, was too cunning to betray herself, and told a different story each time that Nancy got her upon the subject. And the child herself could give no answer, and would become so distressed when questioned, that Nancy finally forbore asking her anything about the past.

But when the cool October days came, another misfortune befell Marjorie. Nancy fell sick, and the child lost her only protector. To be sure, whenever Gentleman Roddy came he would interpose between old Moll and the child, but his visits were not frequent enough to be of much service in the persecution that Marjorie suffered.

The old hag seemed to have a sort of spite against her to tell the truth, Moll thought it a sad pity that Marjorie had not been allowed to die when she was so ill, and was disposed, as she confidentially expressed it to her grandson Jim, "to take it out of her, now Nance was like to kick the bucket." And she was as good as her word. Many a weary day did Marjorie trudge along beside the old hag, laden with an ancient basket, for "cold pieces," which Moll collected in her daily rounds. Many were the cruel blows that fell on the shrinking child's shoulders, until her patient gray eyes began to have a hunted, frightened look that would have half broken Regie's heart to see in them. Marjorie used to wonder why she didn't die then; the days were so long, and the nights were horrible, spent with Moll and Jim, when half-intoxicated and wholly brutal. Nancy lay moaning with acute rheumatism, unable to move hand or foot, and if Marjorie tried to tend the sufferer, or even to give her a cup of water, a curse and a blow from one or the other of her tormentors was sure to be her reward.

"I'll tell ye what, Mary," said Nancy, one morning, in a furtive whisper, as Moll was busy getting the basket ready for another expedition,—"if I'm sick this way long, begorra, I'll ax Gentleman Roddy to do something for you. An' if it 's a good chance you gets, just run away from her — the old divil! O, me darlint, what looks like me little Jim, it 's niver a word av the kind I'd say to ye if I was meself, but maybe they'd kill you like they did — what was I sayin' ? — If she is very bad to ye the day, just speak till the p'liceman, sure; maybe he'd take her till the station, and a good riddance, 'twould be for you and me."

"What 's you doing, ye dirthy spalpeen!" cried Moll,

coming up behind Marjorie as she bent over Nancy. "Go long wid ye, and carry that basket straight, d' ye mind?"

The cuff accompanying the remark made Marjorie reel, but she closed her lips as she saw Nancy's face of pain, and went out of the door and down the rickety stairs with only a few quiet tears streaming down her little pale face.

Moll was in better humor after she had begged successfully of two gentlemen passers, and she plunged into a grog-shop for a drink as soon as the donors were out of sight. The close air of the place made Marjorie feel faint, but luckily, Moll did not stay there long. When she came out she announced cheerfully, that she was going "up to see the 'ristocrats," as she hadn't been up town in quite a while.

"An' it 's tired I am," growled she, as they came out on Broadway near the City Hall Park; "I belave I'll just take a car and ride at me ease, sure. I've the money here, and I'll be sure to get some more in the big bug quarters, — they'd give it just to be shut of me. Mind that basket, ye limb av Satan," shouted she, as Marjorie hit the side of the car in getting in. "Ye must excuse me waiting maid, sir, she 's not so handy as those I'm used till."

The conductor hustled them in, regardless of Moll's impudence, and Marjorie was glad to rest her weary little feet, even though she had to stand at first. Moll had of course taken the only vacant seat, but a kind looking mechanic sitting next to her, after glancing at Marjorie's pale face, rose, and gave the child his seat.

The color flew into her cheeks at the unexpected kindness, and her "O, thank you so much, sir," in her sweet, plaintive voice rang in the man's ears sometime after he

had left the car. He had a little girl of his own at home, and the kindly heart under the blue flannel shirt gave a throb of pain as he thought how hard it would be to see Nelly's face with such a look of care on it.

The motion of the car made Moll sleepy, and the vile whiskey which she had been drinking was beginning to take effect, so her head sank lower and lower until she tried to make a pillow for herself on Marjorie's little shoulder. The child bore it for some minutes very patiently, and then she moved a trifle. Old Moll raised her head, uttered a curse, gave Marjorie a vicious pinch on the arm, which almost made her scream aloud, and then coolly deposited her head on the same resting place again.

Marjorie bit her lips until the blood came. The sensitive child shrank painfully from the eyes of the well-dressed passengers around her; the mortification of having Moll beside her burned in her heart, hotly. Trying to divert herself by looking out at University Place, which they were going through, she met the gaze of a young lady sitting directly opposite her. Marjorie's love for everything pretty was as strong as ever, and this lady's face was almost beautiful. Such a brilliant, clear complexion, lovely, dimpled mouth, and soft brown eyes as she had; the eyes, too, meeting Marjorie's with a look of commiseration which made the child's little mouth quiver, and a tear roll down her cheek. The lady was richly dressed; Marjorie saw the gold bracelets and diamond sleeve-buttons at the slender, white wrists, just above her pretty, silver-gray gloves. Unconsciously, while looking at her, she moved again, and old Moll, raising her head, and being half stupefied, and furious at being disturbed, brought down her fist with all her force on Marjorie's cheek.

The child gave a cry, and in half a minute the young lady was out of her seat, standing beside her.

"Did she hurt you, my poor child?" cried she, her brown eyes flashing, and looking more beautiful than ever in her animated indignation. "The woman is intoxicated; come and take my seat."

Half a dozen gentlemen sprang up to offer a seat to the young lady, and Moll, muttering something, attempted to rise also, but she was too drunk to stand, and accordingly, she tumbled at full length in a heap on the floor of the car.

There immediately arose a commotion. The conductor stopped the car, and one of the gentlemen called a policeman, and the young lady took Marjorie's trembling hand in hers, and held it firmly. Some of the gentlemen who had been standing on the front platform came in to see what was the matter, and one of them walked up to the pretty young lady.

"Why, Miss Virginia," said he, in a surprised voice, raising his hat as he spoke, — "what are you doing here? I didn't even know that you were in town."

"Then you didn't get my card, Mr. Randolph," said she, blushing, as she gave him her hand. "I certainly sent it to you: we (papa and I) are at the Fifth Avenue Hotel."

"Let me take you there," said he, eagerly. "It is not far to walk."

But the young lady's answer was prevented by the commotion that Moll made as she swore at the policeman, who avowed his intention of taking her to the station-house. What was to become of the little girl whom the old woman had struck? Virginia turned to her protegé.

"My dear, what shall I do for you?" she said, kindly.

"Take me away — don't let her catch me," said Marjorie, trying to crouch down behind her new friend. "She'll beat me awfully; Nancy told me I'd better run away."

"Indeed she shall not," said the young lady, all her warm indignation returning as she saw the livid mark that Moll's blow had left on the child's face. "Is she your mother?"

"O no, ma'am! I don't belong to her at all — I'm not Irish, you know," and the old repugnance which she had always manifested at the idea was plainly depicted on Marjorie's speaking countenance as she spoke.

Struck, as Judge Gray had been, with the purity of the child's tone and pronunciation, Virginia paused and looked doubtfully at her. Moll was being dragged off by the policeman, and the conductor rang the bell impatiently, for the car to move on.

"You shall not go back, you shall come with me," said the young lady, seating herself, and motioning Marjorie to take the place next to her. Mr. Randolph, standing in front of them, looked his amazement.

"Are you going to adopt that child?" asked he, comically.

"I don't know," Miss Virginia said, flushing up again. "I mean to take her to the hotel and see what papa says. Here we are, Mr. Randolph; will you come up to our parlor, or will you call this evening?"

The gentleman thanked her, and said he would come after dinner, and then he escorted Virginia up the staircase of the hotel, and left her at the door of her room.

The first thing that the young lady did upon entering her parlor was to ring for the chambermaid; her next

was to take both Marjorie's hands in hers and say, "Now tell me all about it."

But poor Marjorie 's "all" was not very satisfactory; she could only tell that she had been very ill, how many weeks she did not know, and that when she knew what was going on again, her mother was not with her.

"I can't remember," said Marjorie, with a distressed face. "I know I was on a ship with mamma, and the waves were very high, and she was ill. And then I don't recollect after that, much — except the old gentleman with white hair, and strange black eyes who spoke crossly to my mother, and pushed me away. There was a queer bird in the room — O!" cried Marjorie, raising her hand, as if in pain, to her forehead — "who told me I must try to remember more about that time? Somebody did — who was it?"

Her large eyes were so full of misery and terror at the failure of her memory that Virginia hastened to change the subject.

"Then you don't know how you came to be with that dreadful, drunken old woman?"

"No ma'am. I don't seem to have any mind; I guess my sickness made me forget."

Marjorie got along more coherently as she related all the misery she had suffered with old Moll. She told quite connectedly about Nancy, and Gentleman Roddy's kindness, and one speech in particular struck her listener.

"I never used to wear only a dress and a chemise," said Marjorie, coloring painfully as she touched her dirty calico. "Nancy said she sold my clothes when I was sick to get me medicine. Please excuse the way I look." She made her apology with the old, quiet dignity, and Virginia said to herself, —

"The child is right; she must have been brought up with refinement. I never saw such pathetic eyes in my life."

The chambermaid, who had come in during this conversation, and stared inquisitively at the ragged child who was holding Miss Clive's hands, had been dispatched for the young lady's servant, and now the door opened and a handsome, elderly mulatto woman came in. She was very neatly dressed, and her language betrayed that she had been educated.

"Why, Miss Ginny!" said she, raising her hands in surprise as she caught sight of Marjorie. "What 's you'se been doing now, for sure? Hasn't been finding one of dose Sunday-school scholars up here in New York, eh? Poor chile!" as she bent down and saw Marjorie's quivering lips. "D'ye feel bad? Come to your ole Maum Phebe."

"That 's right, Phebe," said her mistress, as the woman took Marjorie gently into her lap. "I found her with the most dreadful old woman — never mind," hastily, as Marjorie's tears began to fall slowly. "I'll tell you the story by and by. You might ring and order some lunch for her, and then, Phebe, give her a bath. I'm going out to try to buy some clothes for her, ready made, and when papa comes in I mean to ask him if I can't take her to Philadelphia."

"Hi! what will your papa say to that?" said Phebe, rocking Marjorie to and fro. "He'll say little missy is an 'extravagant puss,' eh?"

"Yes," said Virginia, laughing, as Phebe, with the quick mimicry of her race imitated her master's voice to the life. "Very likely, but he always lets me do as I like in the end. Be sure to give the child plenty to eat;

she looks half starved. And, Phebe," pausing on the threshold, "get one of my flannel wrappers and put it on her when she has her bath," and, with a kind nod to Marjorie, the bright, beautiful face vanished as the door closed.

"Bress her heart," said Phebe, warmly; "she 's good as gold, little Miss Ginny is. Now, chile, which will you do first, — have the bath, or some lunch? I reckon a little chicken soup and some oysters would taste good, eh, for sure? I'll jest tell dat chambermaid to send a waiter for some."

Marjorie thought that Maum Phebe (as she called herself) was a wonderfully kind person, as she sat rocking her little charge, and talking cheerfully until the lunch she had ordered came. Phebe prepared it for her so nicely, and crumbed bread in the chicken soup (although she was rather disdainful as to its cooking, and told Marjorie that down in Philadelphy they put more than the chicken *bones* in soup, — "reckon de bones was all dat ar soup ever saw"), and spread her toast for her, and gave her a cup of weak tea, adding that "strong tea was not good for a chile; Miss Ginny, she never had none of it till she was grown up, bress her!"

Marjorie enjoyed her meal exceedingly; she only felt sorry that she could not give some of the chicken broth to Nancy, and she told Phebe so. Phebe was quite interested, and asked many questions about the sick woman while she was washing and dressing Marjorie, and she groaned with indignation when she saw long black and blue lines on the child's shoulders and arms, the traces of old Moll's cruelty.

"Dey 's mighty poor white trash," said Phebe, relapsing into her negro dialect, as she frequently did when

excited or pleased. "It 's only de mis'able trash dat beats dey li'le children; 'spectable, decent culled pussons dey do nothing of de kin'."

Marjorie, in one of Miss Virginia's blue flannel wrappers, her long, fair hair floating about her shoulders in loose curls, a little tint of color in her face, and a gleam of pleasure in her large eyes, was a sufficiently pretty picture. And so Phebe thought as she put her on the sofa, and bade her go to sleep; she would waken her when Miss Ginny came.

But the parcels began to arrive before Virginia did, and Phebe had ejaculated "Bress de chile!" a dozen times at least before the bright, glowing face of her mistress appeared.

"Hush, honey; she 's sleeping just as quiet as a lamb in your room. 'Pears as if she'd never go to sleep. That chile 's been awful sick, missy; she starts and cries sometimes, in a kinder queer way that folks allers have after a fever. She ain't any of your poor trash," said Phebe, contemptuously. "I'll tell you why. When she was eating her lunch a while ago, she handled her fork jest as your dear mother used to make you when you was a chile. Eh? dat chile have been tole what table manners is," and Phebe shook her head emphatically.

"I am very much interésted in her," said Virginia, glancing through the half open door at the little sleeper. "Open the boxes, Phebe, and see if I got what was necessary. As the child is not awake yet, you may dress me; take out my gray silk with cherry trimmings, please."

"Miss Ginny expects company to-night, eh?" said Phebe, as she stood gazing with fond eyes at her pretty mistress. "Shall I put the diamond locket out for you? Going to de opera, Miss Ginny?"

THE LITTLE SLEEPER.

"Perhaps," said Virginia, glowing a little. "It 's only Mr. Randolph, Phebe. You remember him, last summer?"

"Hum!" said Phebe, smiling. The gay, manly face of Miss Ginny's "New York beau" had pleased Phebe greatly during their stay at Cape May last July. She had her own ideas about Mr. Randolph, but she was too prudent to hint them to anybody. "Mr. Randolph is a very nice gentleman; he always says 'How-d'ye-do, Phebe,' as polite as can be."

"The child is awake," said Virginia, hastily, hearing a movement in the other room. She found Marjorie sitting up on the sofa, looking the picture of bewilderment.

"Did you forget where you were?" said Virginia, gayly kissing her protegé's sweet, child lips. "I have some nice clothes for you in the other room; will you let Phebe put them on?"

"O, yes!" cried Marjorie, gratefully. "I don't know what I can do for you, ma'am, you're *so* kind!"

"You needn't say 'ma'am' to me," laughed Virginia. "You can call me Miss Virginia, — dear me! I don't know your name yet." A cloud passed over Marjorie's face.

"Nancy called me Mary," said she, soberly, "but I *know* that isn't my name. I had a different name once; a longer name, — but I can't remember."

Again the pitiful, frightened look which Virginia had seen before. "If I keep you with me, I sha'n't call you Mary," said she. "Do you object to my giving you another name?"

"O, no," said Marjorie. "Anything *you* choose would be pretty, I know."

"I'll tell you what, missy," said Phebe, nodding her

head as she dressed Marjorie in the pretty blue delaine which her mistress had brought home, "it 's my 'pinion that dis chile has been kidnapped."

"Nonsense, Phebe," said Virginia. "Kidnappers are your great bugbears, but I don't believe they are met with in New York. My dear, you look very neat and smart; Phebe is the perfection of dressing maids. Just fasten this locket for me, — there 's papa's key in the door. Phebe, keep the child here till I send for her," and Virginia went into the parlor and closed the door between the rooms.

Marjorie could hear the murmur of voices, and sat wondering what was going to happen next. She did not realize that her own fate was hanging in the balance, and when, after an absence of half an hour, Virginia's clear voice called "Phebe!" she followed the woman with her usual docility.

Mr. Clive was sitting in an easy chair, and Virginia, looking lovely in her gray dress, was upon a low stool at his feet, her arms clasped around his knee. He was a fine, stately looking man of perhaps fifty, with keen gray eyes, whose glance could be stern and penetrating enough. He was smiling now, however, at some speech of his petted daughter, and the first look that he gave Marjorie was one of surprise.

"Is that the child?" said he. Marjorie came shyly toward him, and, encouraged by a smile from Virginia, put up her cheek to be kissed. The unconscious grace and innocent manner were powerful arguments in her favor, and Mr. Clive bent down and kissed the child with a smile.

"How would you like to go to Philadelphia?" said he, keeping hold of the small hand.

"With Miss Virginia?" asked Marjorie. "I'd go *anywhere* with her, sir. She spoke so kindly this morning — she wanted to give me her own seat in the car when Moll struck me," and Marjorie's head went down as she choked over the sob which came with the last word.

"Very right," said Mr. Clive, nodding, and giving one of his keen glances at the truthful little face before him. He seemed to be satisfied with what he saw there, for he said presently, "What do you think about it, Phebe? It will be another care for you."

"Maum Phebe can work pretty well yet," said she, showing all her white teeth. "De chile is a good chile, I'se warrant, and it never would do to leave her with de awful ole woman again."

Mr. Clive asked Marjorie several questions about old Moll, and where she lived. All that Marjorie could tell him was that the name of the street was Randall's Alley; she had no idea of the locality. And she turned so pale at the bare idea of going back there, even to point out the house, that Mr. Clive relinquished his half-formed plan of taking the child there in a carriage, to ascertain the truth of her statements. As Phebe had said, Mr. Clive seldom denied any wish of Virginia's, and he was fain to confess to himself, as he leaned back in his chair and listened to the conversation going on between his daughter and Marjorie, that there was a curious charm about the child, and that Virginia might as well be indulged this time.

"What do you mean to call her?" said he, abruptly.

Virginia put her hand upon his knee with a caressing motion. "I don't know," said she, laughing; "she does'nt want to be called Mary" —

"It is not my name," interrupted Marjorie, eagerly.

"So you said; what shall we christen her, Papa? Not too fanciful a name — dear me! Let me look at you, child." Virginia pursed up her pretty brow in an attempt to frown.

"I have it!" cried she, clapping her hands. "With your yellow hair and wide-opened, limpid eyes, you put me in mind of a field-daisy — what do you say to that, papa? Doesn't she look like one? I 'll call you 'Daisy.'"

Marjorie drew a long, satisfied sigh. "I like that," said she. "It 's real pretty; thank you, ma'am. Is that all my name? It seems to me," the terror coming up in her face again, — "it seems to me as if somebody asked me once if I had only one name. It was a girl with big eyes; there was snow on the ground, and lots of children; O! *why* can't I remember anything?"

Virginia exchanged a glance with her father.

"That won't do," said he, in an undertone. "There has been some great shock to the brain. Daisy," drawing her toward him, "you must not even try to remember things. Virginia says you tell her that you were very ill; people sometimes forget the past for a long while and then, suddenly they wake up, and it is all clear again. That may be the case with you; your brain is resting, just as your body does when you are asleep, and you must not try to wake it up in a hurry. You want another name, eh? How would it do to take a piece of mine? Virginia, you might call her Daisy Russell."

"Is that your name, sir?" asked Marjorie.

"Yes, Selden Russell Clive, Daisy."

"Then Miss Virginia is Miss Clive?"

"Bress de chile! of course she be," burst in Phebe.

"There 's de dinner gong, missy; I 'll take care of Miss Daisy while you're gone."

"It 's very odd," said Mr. Clive, as they went down the hall toward the dining-room; "that child looks like some one — puts me in mind of some one that I know. I think it 's more in expression than feature; a curious lighting up of the eyes when she smiles. And, for the life of me, I can't tell who it is she resembles. Are you sure you will not tire of your Quixotic scheme, Virginia? I will consent to it upon one condition; if we assume care of the child, I will not have her thrown out helplessly upon the world. She must be taught how to take care of herself."

"That is just what I intend," said Virginia, quietly; and being by this time at the *table d'hote*, they began to talk of other matters.

Mr. Randolph came that evening, as he had promised, and Mr. Clive's greeting to the young man was even more cordial than Virginia's. One of the first questions that the young gentleman asked was about the little girl whom Virginia had rescued that morning; and when Marjorie came out into the parlor on an errand for Phebe, Mr. Randolph could hardly believe that it was the same child. Virginia enjoyed his surprise, and Mr. Clive asked if he could tell him how to find out where Randall's Alley was.

"I think that our policeman friend of this morning might afford us some information," said he, laughing. "Judging by that wretched woman's appearance it must be one of the worst dens in the city. I happen to remember the man's number; if you will allow me, Mr. Clive, I will find him in the morning and make inquiries about the woman, and Randall's Alley. Can I offer my services on the expedition?"

Mr. Clive thanked him, and accepted the offer, politely. Virginia gave him a grateful look, for which Mr. Randolph thought he would be willing to take several journeys to Randall's Alley and back.

Marjorie's night's rest and the happy awaking early in the morning to the recollection that she was with kind friends and had no old Moll to beat her and force her to carry a heavy basket, brightened her face to its old serene expression, and she looked more like the child who played with Regie than she had ever done since she left Judge Gray's. Virginia began to be intensely interested in her; it seemed to be Marjorie's lot to fall in with people to whom her sweet, plaintive face was an appeal for help. Mr. Clive told Virginia to let the child breakfast with them in their parlor, and his keen eyes noticed, as Phebe had done, the entire ease and gentle propriety of Marjorie's manner while at the table. He was careful not to tell her of his proposed visit to Randall's Alley, and when Mr. Randolph came in, about ten o'clock, he cautioned him, aside, to say nothing of their expedition.

"It is such an out-of-the-way place, Mr. Clive," said Mr. Randolph, as they walked out on the pavement in front of the hotel. "Over by the East River, and (as I supposed) one of the very lowest quarters. I, therefore, brought down my carriage; it 's at the Twenty-third Street entrance."

The gentlemen got into it, and Mr. Randolph gave his coachman directions how to get there.

"Old Moll (as little Daisy calls her) was discharged from the police station early this morning. The policemen say that she is an old offender, and has been frequently confined in the Tombs for disorderly conduct. My friend, No. 32, who carried her off yesterday, says he

doubts very much whether we find her, as women of her description spend their time chiefly in the streets, begging, or in low grog shops in a state of beastly intoxication."

After some trouble, Randall's Alley and the tenement where Moll lived was found; a ragged urchin from the corner grocery offered to show them "where Mother Moll hang out," and stumbled up the dark stair in front of them. Mr. Clive buttoned his coat carefully over his gold watch and chain before venturing up, and whispered to Mr. Randolph that he felt very much as if he was plunging blindly into a den of thieves.

"There 's the room," said the ragged boy, giving a thump on the door. "Likely you'll find old Moll on the floor — it 's the most comfortablist place fur she, when she can't stand, yer see."

"Stop grinning," said Mr. Randolph, giving him a quarter.

"Thank ye, sir," said the boy, grinning more than ever at the munificent gift, which far exceeded his expectations. "Guess I'll open the door; nobody to home."

"What 's wanting?" said a faint voice, as they paused on the threshold. Mr. Clive's eyes, as they gradually became accustomed to the dim light, saw a squalid figure upon a straw bed in a corner of the room, and a pair of sad, sunken eyes regarding the intruders with a frown.

"Does a woman live here whose name is Moll?" said Mr. Clive, seeing that his companion left matters to him, now that they had reached their destination.

"Who 's wanting her?" said Nancy, groaning as she tried to raise herself on her elbow. "She hain't been here since yesterday morning, — like as not she 's locked up."

"Are you Nancy?" asked Mr. Clive, drawing a little

neared, but not too close, as he had a nervous horror of catching a fever or some infectious disease. Indeed, it was a strong proof of his interest in the little waif his daughter had found that he should have offered to come into such a place to make inquiries about her.

"What do you know about Nancy?" said she, with some alarm in her tone. "I've been doing nothing sure; flat on my back here for four weeks with rheumatiz."

"I only want to ask you about a little girl" — Nancy interrupted him with a cry.

"There ain't no harm come to my little Mary?"

"Not at all," said Mr. Clive. "My daughter found a little girl with an old woman in a Broadway car yesterday, and as she seemed to treat the child cruelly, she ventured to interfere."

"The poor little darlint!" cried Nancy, with a string of curses for Moll. "An' is she quite safe, now?"

Mr. Clive told the story in as few words as possible, and then asked the woman if the child was any relation of hers. Nancy glanced uneasily at the faces beside her.

"Send the boy away," said she, suddenly. "It 's little I knows, but I'll tell ye that, an' welcome."

"It was one hot night about two months back (an' more, may be; I am not quite rightly as to dates) when Moll came home wid the child. It 's reeling drunk she was; and I thought the young one was kilt entirely, for she had a big cut the size of me finger on her head, an' I had to cut off her hair there — ye may find the scar now. And it 's very ill and like to die Mary was. I did me best, sir; I tried to keep her from old Moll, and I got medicine fur her, and nursed her till she got able to go around again. But where she came from, or who she is, I know no more than ye does. An'

if ye'll only kape her, an' be kind to her it 's all I ask; as purty and swate a child as iver lived, with eyes like my Jim's."

Evidently this was all Nancy knew, for although she repeated the story several times, the main facts never varied. She gave, as her opinion, that Moll knew no more than she, for, as she said, the child had no rich clothes or jewelry upon her person, which would have been the only temptation to Moll to steal her. Nancy did not know of the gold beads, or she might have changed her opinion. Nancy said that Moll was sometimes absent days at a time, and she gave so little hope of learning anything new from her that Mr. Clive relinquished the idea. He gave Nancy a handsome sum of money, however, and told her that the child had spoken gratefully and kindly of her care, and was going away, when a sudden thought made him turn back.

"If you need assistance, or if you hear, at any time, any story from Moll about the child, I will give you directions to a place down town where you can go with the information. Can you read?"

"A little," stammered Nancy, shamefacedly. "I can read printing, sure."

Mr. Clive put back the card upon which he had intended writing, and gave her the business card of Clive Bros. instead. Then he bade Nancy good-by, kindly; Mr. Randolph stayed behind to add his gift to her little store, and Nancy's loud spoken blessings followed them down-stairs.

"It is a most mysterious affair," said Mr. Clive, as they picked their way back to the side street where the carriage was standing. "I am almost as much interested as Virginia herself. I wonder if advertising would do

any good? As we have no date to go by — Lord bless my soul! stop him, stop him!"

A man, a very singular looking man too, with bright black eyes, and long white hair hanging down on his shoulders, had just passed the two gentlemen, and as Mr. Clive uttered this exclamation in an excited voice, he darted with great rapidity between the narrow passage way of two houses, and disappeared before Mr. Clive could follow him.

"My dear sir!" exclaimed Mr. Randolph, in amazement, "did that extraordinary individual rob you? Shall I go for a policeman — though I doubt if I can find one in this locality."

Mr. Clive had by this time turned very pale. "No matter," said he, faintly, taking Mr. Randolph's offered arm as a support. "It looked like the ghost of a scoundrel whom I thought was dead and buried long ago. Strangely enough, when I was in New York last August, a distinguished Judge of your State asked me for information of that very fellow. I must let him know that the man is alive. He," Mr. Clive hesitated as he got into the carriage, — "he (if that is the man I suppose) was concerned in a very unhappy matter in relation to my youngest brother. May I ask you to say nothing of this to my daughter? She was very fond of her uncle, though quite young at the time she saw him last, and I do not wish to agitate that matter again just at present."

Mr. Randolph of course assured Mr. Clive that he would not mention the subject to Virginia, and in a short time the elder gentleman regained his composure, and the conversation turned upon other topics, as they drove down to Wall Street.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHAT CAME OF MISS CLIVE'S WHIM.

"MISS VIRGINIA," said Marjorie, laying down her book with a sober face, a little sigh treading upon her last words, "do you suppose I'll *ever* find my father?"

They were sitting in Virginia's room, which was as bright and cheerful as it was possible for a room to be; a brisk wood fire crackled away on the hearth, and Marjorie sat directly in front of it on a low stool, her book on her lap. Virginia had been quietly watching her for several moments, and the shade that had slowly stolen over her face was explained by her question.

"My dear child! Are you puzzling your poor little brain over the old problem? Don't you remember that papa told you, you must not even *try* to think about the past? And what made you think of your father just now?"

"I don't seem to remember him at all," said Marjorie. "But I've either talked about finding him to somebody, or else I dreamed it."

"Try to believe it a dream," said Virginia, smiling. Much as she was interested in Marjorie's recollections it gave her a nervous feeling to see the child's painful endeavor to determine which was reality and which imagination in the few links that her memory could gather up, so she changed the subject skillfully by opening a carved cabinet which stood at one side of the room, and asking Marjorie whether she did not want to look at its

contents. Phebe had given glowing descriptions of the beauty of "Miss Ginny's" jewels therein contained, and Marjorie came eagerly to Virginia's side to examine the cases and boxes which filled the drawers.

"A great many of these were my mother's," said Virginia, opening a case which held a necklace of large, pure pearls. "She wore these the night she was married, Daisy. I have a picture of her with that very necklace around her throat. I'll show it to you, presently. These funny, old-fashioned gold beads, and pink topaz bracelets belonged to my grandmother (papa's mother I mean): aren't they pretty?" and she slipped one around her white wrist, where it sparkled very becomingly.

"O, Miss Virginia!" cried Marjorie, in delight, as she hung over a costly and beautiful cross of diamonds and rubies, with ear-rings of the same gems. "I never saw anything so lovely — never! It looks like a cross of tears, with drops of blood at the heart."

"You fanciful Daisy-blossom! You make me feel uncomfortable. Where do you get your odd ideas, I wonder? And how do you like this?"

This, was a tiny dove, formed of small diamonds, with a little gold ring in its beak, from which hung a large sapphire, the whole being intended as a pendant for the neck. The design was beautiful, and Marjorie gazed at it in speechless admiration.

"It 's just like the blue waters of the bay, Miss Virginia, as they looked yesterday when we were driving. Did Mr. Clive give it to you?"

"No, Daisy; that belonged to my mother. Somebody whom I loved very much gave it to her. Dear Uncle George!" cried Virginia, warmly. "How I wish I could see you again."

"Is he dead?" asked Marjorie, timidly.

"No, Daisy, but he 's very far away, hundreds of miles, — in China, and I don't know when he will come home. Here, in that under drawer, are some curiously carved fans which he sent to me when I was a little girl. He used to live here once, long ago; my mother was very fond of him."

Marjorie thought that the ivory fans with the queer houses and birds and junks carved on them, were the oddest things she could possibly imagine. Virginia explained to her what they were, and then she opened another division of her cabinet to look for the miniature of her mother which she had promised to show her, and put a case into Marjorie's hand.

"This isn't it," said Marjorie, as she opened the clasp. "O! what a handsome man; he looks a little — a very little, like Mr. Clive. It can't be he; is it?"

"Dear me, I gave you the wrong picture," said Virginia, looking a little annoyed. "Daisy, I shall have to ask you not to speak of having seen that before papa. It 's a miniature of the uncle I was just talking about — papa's youngest brother."

Marjorie seemed to like the picture, for she gazed at it for some moments in silence. Virginia drew her close to her side and looked over her shoulder at it.

"Poor Uncle George!" she sighed, softly.

"Did he do anything naughty?" asked Marjorie, lifting her clear gray eyes to Virginia's face.

"Well" — Virginia hesitated. "It 's a long story, dear. He is my grandfather's third son; papa is the eldest; Uncle Percy, who lives in New York, comes next; and then Uncle George. He, Uncle George, was so gay and merry, and such a tall, handsome fellow. He used

to ride me on his shoulder when I was a little girl; I haven't seen him for eleven years, — not since I was ten years old, — but I love him just as well as ever."

"Why won't he come home?" asked Marjorie, as Virginia paused.

"Because my grandfather had a terrible quarrel with him, Daisy. The very last time I saw Uncle George was just before he sailed for Europe, where grandfather was sending him on business for the firm. He displeased his father dreadfully by marrying without his consent. I don't know who the lady was — none of us know, unless, perhaps, papa. And O! Daisy, grandpa is a hard old man, for he vowed that he would never see poor Uncle George again, after this unhappy marriage. Uncle George came back to this country, and was very ill indeed in New York, at my uncle Percy's; I remember that no one dared to let grandpa know he was there. Papa went on to see him, and tried to get grandpa to listen to reason, but he was very angry with papa for his interference. When Uncle George got well he went away to China, and has been there ever since. I don't know very much about that time; papa does not like to have me ask too many questions; but I know he hears from Uncle George every little while. I want him at home," cried Virginia, forgetting to whom she was talking, the tears springing into her bright brown eyes. "I mean to ask papa if I can't write to him."

"It's too bad, Miss Virginia," said Marjorie, with quick sympathy. "The picture has such a kind look. It makes me think" —

"Stop thinking!" said Virginia, suddenly, stopping her lips, with a playful hand. "I won't have it; mind, Daisy. What a long story I've been telling you. I

never look at Uncle George's picture ; it makes me feel so badly to think of the strange, mysterious cloud over him. Here is the picture I meant to show you; the cases are just alike."

"How very much like you," cried Marjorie. "It looks as if it were taken for you. What a pretty dress — and there are the pearls, just as you said. Miss Virginia," with a change of voice, "how old were you when your mother died ?"

"I was just fifteen, Daisy; just wanting my mother most. My poor child," and Marjorie was drawn close to Virginia's heart, — "that morning when I saw you first, I knew you were an orphan from the hungry, motherless look of your eyes, and I made up my mind that if I could put a little joy in your life you should have it."

Marjorie clung to her lovely friend with gratitude and admiring affection too strong for utterance, as she kissed the soft lips many times.

"I know just how lonely you feel, my little Daisy, though part of your life has been hard and cruel, and mine has been bright and full of sunshine. We want our mothers, don't we, dear? Perhaps they are together up in the blue skies, and are glad because I found you. I am not very much older than you, but I've always depended so much on myself that it makes me seem older than I am, and you must learn to depend on me, and tell me if anything troubles you."

Marjorie promised, and the loving words were written on her heart in letters as bright as the tears that hung on her long lashes.

"Bress the chile!" said Phebe, putting her head inside the door. "If you'se going out dis afternoon better be getting ready. John 's at de door, and those hosses is

prancing because dey don't like to be waiting. Shall I put on li'le Missy Daisy's hat?"

Phebe, of her own accord, had adopted the respectful prefix of "Miss" before Marjorie's name, and when Virginia asked her why she did so, answered, "Laws, Miss Ginny, dat chile is a born lady for sure; I *can't* call her nuffin else, and I reckon she 's been spoken to dat way, 'fore now. You see some day, Phebe tells de trufe."

Marjorie had been in Philadelphia nearly two months, and Virginia had thought much and deeply of what plan she should pursue with the child. She laid out the day very systematically for her little protegé, and had regular hours for study, sending her to walk with Phebe the days that she did not take her in the carriage. Virginia's young friends laughed and shrugged their shoulders at what they called her last whim; and one lady, an old friend of the family, considered it to be her duty to speak to Mr. Clive about the child who, as the story went, had been picked up in the street in New York.

But Mr. Clive was courteous and imperturbable as ever, and the officious lady was heard to declare, in a much vexed voice, that "he was every bit as bad as that spoiled daughter of his — perhaps rather more so, as there 's no fool equal to an old fool!"

For her friends' comments Virginia cared very little; all she desired was to conscientiously fulfill her duty toward the child in whom she felt such warm interest. She had a plan only waiting for her father's approval to be carried out, and the evening of the day when she told Marjorie her uncle's story she had an opportunity of speaking to him about it which she was not slow to improve.

They dined alone that night, and after Marjorie had

listened to Virginia's singing for half an hour, Phebe came for her, and with a soft good-night kiss from Virginia, and a pleasant nod from Mr. Clive she went upstairs, to bed.

Virginia waited until her father had finished his evening paper, and then, having lit another cigar for him, she took her favorite seat on a low stool beside him.

"I saw Mrs. Moulton to-day, papa," began she. "It looked so pleasant there. I went into the school-room, and I declare, I could almost imagine myself a scholar again."

"You don't want to go back to Madame Dubarry's?" said Mr. Clive, with a look of comical alarm. "That Frenchwoman and her bills were a perfect swindle."

"Poor Madame," said Virginia, smiling. "You never forgave her for that fib she told about the German lessons. No, don't be alarmed, papa; I have no desire to return to that school. But you know you always liked dear Mrs. Moulton."

"She is a fine woman, a very fine woman," said Mr. Clive, quite warmly, for him. "How is she getting along with her school?"

"Only pretty well, I fancy. I thought I should recommend Mrs. Peyton to send her little girls there; it would be a great help to get a few more scholars. Papa," with a pretty little glance of entreaty, "I have been thinking that I would like to send Daisy there, if you think best."

"Ha!" said Mr. Clive, with a pinch of her cheek as it grew rosy under his keen glance. "That was what was coming, eh? I knew something must be wanting when you got into your coaxing seat: what did Mrs. Moulton think of your fine scheme, pray?"

"She was very much pleased with Daisy, and I had a long conversation with her alone. I think she would be an excellent person to take charge of her. You see, papa," very humbly, "I am young, and I am so afraid I might make mistakes. I might indulge Daisy too much, or, on the other hand, I might not be firm enough. And I'm hot, and quick too, and perhaps if I reproved her too severely I should do more harm than good."

Mr. Clive looked at the face that was so fair in its self-depreciation, and thought that there would not be much danger of its owner's doing anything very far from right, but he did not say so.

"And what if I say I think it too expensive a plan?" said he. "To educate Daisy thoroughly and fit her for being a governess, will cost a pretty little sum. It will be a six years' piece of work."

"I did not think you would refuse," said Virginia, a little startled.

"And if I do?"

"Then," said she, very quietly, but with a certain dignity that, though perfectly respectful, was very determined, "I should be obliged to ask you for some of my money — mamma's money I mean — to do it. I have assumed the responsibility of Daisy's future, and it would hardly be just in me not to do all in my power for her."

Mr. Clive's glance at the downcast face was full of proud, tender satisfaction.

"Right," said he, heartily. "There spoke the Clive will."

"O, papa! Have I said anything I ought not?"

"No, my dear little daughter," and to Virginia's surprise, her father's usually firm voice was a little unsteady.

"You are very judicious in all you say, and you have evidently thought well over your plans for Daisy. I have no objection to them, and I will see that the bills are paid. What an independent young woman I have for a daughter! We have suddenly remembered our one-and-twenty years, eh?"

"O, thank you, papa — once, for Daisy, and many, many times for myself," cried Virginia, throwing both arms around his neck. "It wasn't the twenty one years at all, sir. I thought you were in earnest; I ought to have known you were only teasing me."

"Papa," said she, after a few moments, during which she had been trying to gain courage. "I want to ask another favor of you. Don't be angry, please; won't you tell me something about Uncle George?"

Mr. Clive started. "What has set you thinking of him?" asked he.

"I was looking over mamma's cabinet this morning, and I came across his picture. Have you heard from him lately?"

"Yes," said her father, with a quick glance at her. "He is thinking of coming home."

"Papa! you don't mean it?"

"Yes. We never have talked about the matter much, Virginia, because it was such a sad piece of business, but I am ready to answer you any questions you choose to ask, now. If he comes home you might hear the comments of others, outsiders, and I should not like to have you appear ignorant. Percy and I both wrote to George and advised his coming back; your grandfather failed a good deal last winter, and we think that perhaps he may, at the last, relent, and ask for George, — in which case, your uncle should be here."

"I am *very* glad," said Virginia in a low voice, full of deep feeling. "Will he bring his wife with him?"

"My dear child! But I forgot — you do not know the mystery which hangs over that unhappy lady. George, after receiving a very harsh letter from your grandfather, came to this country, leaving her in England. Immediately after his arrival here he was taken violently ill" —

"I remember that — you went to New York to see him," said Virginia.

"Yes. His wife not hearing from him (or from some other cause which we know nothing of), sailed for this country, with her child, and from that time has never been heard of."

"How shocking!" cried Virginia.

"You would have said so if you could have seen the distress he displayed when, upon writing to her, after he recovered, he learned from the people with whom she boarded that she had sailed for this country. I say, sailed; he was never able to ascertain definitely that she arrived here. She must have taken passage under an assumed name, for the most vigilant search could discover nothing. It nearly threw your uncle into another fever; though, I must say, hard as it sounds, that perhaps the poor lady's disappearance was the best thing for George, as, although your grandfather may forgive him, he would never accept her as a daughter."

"Was she so very dreadful?"

"I don't know, my dear," smiling at Virginia's expression. "The subject was a very painful one, and I asked George as few questions about it as possible. Your uncle Percy knew more about it than I did; George told him more of the particulars. I only know that she was

a Frenchwoman, and called very handsome. George was so young, only twenty-four, and he was open to temptation in the form of a handsome intriguing woman. A confounded, scheming nation," added Mr. Clive, who evidently shared his father's prejudice. "It 's just as well that the poor lady has disappeared, but I feel very sorry about the child."

"Was it a boy or a girl?" asked Virginia.

"I don't remember, but it would have been a comfort to poor George out in China. I must tell you that he has made a strong position for himself there. He is a partner in the concern where we got him a clerkship, and must be very wealthy. China is a great field, if one can only make up his mind to be an exile."

"Thank you very much for telling me all the story," said Virginia, rising, as she saw that her father had finished his cigar. "Are you going out, papa? Then, good-night; I am tired with my long drive to-day, and shall go to bed early."

The next day Virginia told Marjorie what her proposed plan of sending her to school was. The child was delighted; she seemed to have suddenly acquired an ardent thirst for learning, and the prospect of being with the pleasant-looking, sweet-voiced lady whom she had seen the day before was very charming. She was conquering her shyness now, in a measure, and liked the idea of being at school with other little girls of her own age.

Virginia concluded that it would be best to enter the child regularly as a boarder, only coming home once a month, as the other scholars did, resolving that the monthly holidays should be holidays indeed, with all the brightness that she could put into them. Marjorie en-

tered with great interest into all the preparations which Virginia saw fit to make for her, and Mr. Clive told his daughter to see that she had all her wants supplied in a liberal manner.

The first week of the New Year saw Marjorie established at Mrs. Moulton's school, under charge of one whom Virginia felt was in every way calculated to make the child happy. And there, in her own little room, sitting contentedly by the window with a pile of study-books before her, we will say good-by to Marjorie's troubled childhood, and take a story-teller's privilege of a leap into the future which now lies like an unwritten page before the calm gray eyes, and the simple faith of our little heroine.

CHAPTER XV.

SIX YEARS AFTER. — PUCK AND POSY.

"'TAIN'T any use of talkin'!" said Puck, gazing disconsolately out of the window, both chubby fists rammed into his pockets with the desperation of despair. "'Tain't any use of talkin'!" Whenever I pwopose to go to the fwog pond it always wains."

"Jonathan Edwards Frost!" exclaimed Posy, dropping her doll in scandalized amazement. "Ain't you ashamed to be wishing for fine weather, and the earth going at a loss for rain?"

"No, I ain't," said Puck doggedly. "It hasn't wained for two weeks, and it might have waited for one day, I *should* think. And I wanted a gween fwog dweffully; wish it never would wain again!"

"You're a naughty, selfish boy," said Posy, energetically, with the funny little bob of her head with which she was wont to emphasize her remarks. "Don't I tell you that the earth 's going at a loss for rain? Silvy said so last night to Aunt Debby, and I heard her. God won't love you one bit if you scold Him that way."

"How do you know?" demanded Puck, promptly. "I asked Aunt Debby yesterday if you mightn't come along, and she said if I'd be very good, she'd see. And," in an insinuating voice, "I was goin' to catch a fwog for you, Posy; a gween one, with gweat big eyes."

"Were you?" said Posy, eagerly, forgetting her conscientious scruples with amiable celerity at this attractive offer. "O! p'r'aps it will clear up by and by, and if it

don't, you just pray for fine weather to-morrow, and I'll pray too, hard. You're a good boy, me dear, to think of your little sister," and Posy gave the sturdy shoulder nearest her a most motherly pat.

"Well," said Puck, turning away from the window, and making up his mind that there was not a solitary patch of blue sky to be seen above the trees, "let 's go down-stairs and see Chloe in the kitchen; I'm tired to deff of stayin' in the nursewy."

The plan met with Posy's approbation, for whatever mischief did not originate in Puck's busy brain was certain to be found in his little five-year-old sister's, and the pair trotted off to the kitchen as fast as their fat legs could carry them, Puck trying a slide down the banisters on the way, and motioning silence to Posy as they crept past the room where Grandma Frost and Aunt Debby sat.

It was a large old-fashioned house on a Southern plantation, and built very much as all planters' houses are, except that the kitchen was not away from the house, as is commonly the case, but connected with the back-rooms on the ground-floor by a hall. This had been added when old Mrs. Frost and her niece, Miss Deborah, came to live with her grandson, for the old lady had lived at the North all her life, and could not reconcile herself to an outside kitchen, or, as Aunt Debby expressed it, "she wanted to have things handy." The family was not a large one, now: Reuben Frost, the father of Puck and Posy, was dead, and grandma lived at the plantation with Aunt Debby, and another grandchild, Dora Lyndon, who was the child of her only daughter. Mrs. Frost was the children's guardian, and beside, although the plantation was going to wreck and ruin on account of the war, she

felt that she must remain there to save what she could for Puck and Posy from the confiscating fingers of her secession neighbors.

The two small sinners made their raid upon the kitchen with grand success and the usual commotion which attended their efforts to amuse themselves. Chloe was busy making soda biscuit when they arrived, and good-naturedly gave them a bit of dough to experiment upon, first tying a big apron before each one to protect their clothes. Posy dug away sturdily at her portion, but Puck grew tired of such "girl's work," and was inspired with an idea of improving Chloe's biscuit by sticking a few black pins in them, and making believe that the heads were raisins. He accomplished this feat successfully while Chloe's back was turned, and then, pulling off his apron, pondered upon what mischief he could perform next. The faucet of the water-tank suggested how funny it would be to turn on the water until it overflowed the pan beneath ; that would save Chloe the trouble of washing the floor, and beside, it would run into the rat-hole by the fire-place, and if the rat was at home he would be forced to run out, and how scared Chloe would be if he came up ! Puck rather thought that she might try to jump on the table in such an emergency, and laughed aloud at the picture of fat old Chloe in such a predicament.

"What are you laughing at, me dear?" said Posy, hearing the chuckle.

"Sumpin' vewy funny," said Puck, mysteriously. "Don't say nothin' about it, Posy, but I'm goin' to get that wat out of his hole."

"How?" said Posy, dropping her biscuit on the floor in her eagerness.

"You'll see!" and Posy, forced to restrain her impa-

tience, picked up her dough, in no way discomposed by the specks of dirt which it had gathered on the floor.

Silvy, the children's own particular attendant, was in the washroom, washing some of Posy's white frocks in the peculiarly leisurely manner of a Southern negress, and presently Posy came out to visit her, having put her biscuit in a patty-pan on the hearth, by Chloe's. Posy wanted to help with the washing, of course, and by way of aiding the process, she climbed up on the bench beside Silvy with the indigo bag in her chubby fingers, and before the girl understood what was going on, a stream of blueing descended upon the contents of the wash-tub, by no means improving the white frocks therein.

"Law's me! what 's dat?" cried Silvy, in great indignation, seizing the small offender in her arms and putting her on the ground. "What you do dat for, missy? Jest look at dem cloes — how you like to wear *dem*, eh? Must be up to sumfin' de whole day, for true!"

"You always put in blue stuff, Silvy; I've seen you with my own eyes," said Posy, defending herself.

At this moment a dire outcry arose from the kitchen, and both Posy and Silvy ran up the steps to see what was the matter. Chloe had just discovered five separate streams of water meandering over her kitchen floor, and was at present shaking Puck with all her might, while the culprit responded to this treatment by a series of roars, kicks, and endeavors to bite Chloe in any vulnerable spot that was within reach. Blot, a small Skye terrier (like an animated door-mat in appearance, but of singular sagacity, and devoted to his little master, Puck), was proving that devotion by running at Chloe's legs, nipping her fat ankles, and adding his barks to the general hubbub which prevailed.

"What 's all this noise about?" demanded a voice from the hall door, and as both combatants attempted to answer at once, Aunt Debby whisked across the floor, gathering her skirts about her, and turned off the faucet, which Chloe had forgotten to do, in her wrath at the perpetrator of this outrage.

"I never did see such a child!" exclaimed Aunt Debby, in her energetic New England way. "Chloe, let him alone. Puck, stop kicking, and inform me what possessed you to turn on that water and get the kitchen in such a mess?"

"Seven evil spiwits," said Puck solemnly, mindful of the Bible reading that morning, with which he had been much impressed.

"You naughty child," said Aunt Debby, severely, divided between her amusement and vexation. "I don't know what I *shall* do with you. Just see what a wet place; take a mop, Silvy, and help Chloe clean up."

"He only wanted to get the rat out of his hole," said Posy, taking the offender by the hand, and preparing for a valiant defense of her brother.

"Yes, it was just to see the wat wun," said Puck, eagerly. "O, Aunt Debby, do you b'lieve he'd have dwowned, weally?"

But his aunt declined to enter upon that branch of the subject.

"There 's some blue sky," said Posy, suddenly, and Puck's drooping spirits revived at the intelligence.

"May we go to the fwog pond? You said you'd see, and it 's clewing up butiful."

"If you'll put on your rubbers, both of you, and be very careful of Posy," said Aunt Debby, looking at the dancing pairs of eyes in front of her. "Perhaps it 's as

good a place as any to play, but if you get into any more mischief, children, I'll put you both in bed."

Puck pranced wildly up-stairs after his net, and Silvy put on Posy's india-rubbers, while Blot sat upon his hind legs with a peculiarly droll thumping of his tail on the floor at the same time, and begged, in dog language, to accompany his master.

Aunt Debby smiled involuntarily as she watched the little procession going down the path, and wondered what scrape they would fall into next as she beat up some eggs for Chloe's cake.

The frog pond, where Puck was only allowed to go by special permission, was a pool of not very deep water, standing in one of the fields at some little distance from the house. It had originally been used for the cows to drink from, but the spring, from some unknown cause, gave out, and the water became stagnant, so the cattle were driven elsewhere, and the pool was left to the possession of the frogs. The children thought it the most delightful retreat on the place, although there was not a tree anywhere near it, and the sun came blazing out very soon after their arrival.

"You just hold Blot," said Puck, in an important voice, to Posy. "He'll go in swimmin' and fwighten the fwogs. Softly, now; I'll put in my net here, by this big stone, an' catch that fat fellow, I weckon."

Breathless expectation on the part of Posy; a subdued grunt from Puck.

"He 's went away, under that gween moss."

"Gone home to his little girl frogs," said Posy, in a shrill whisper. "There 's another — quick, Puck!"

By this time Puck was so much excited that he leaned too far over the side, and with a splash and a bounce he rolled over into the water.

"I've got him!" shouted he, triumphantly, coming up gasping, with a frog struggling in his clinched fist. "Stop hollering, Posy; 'tain't deep water."

"You've got on your bran new stockings, and you know Aunt Debby said she'd put us to bed if we did any more mischief, me dear," said Posy, dismally, allowing Blot to escape in her anxiety, which opportunity he instantly improved by dashing into the pond and joining his master.

"Now don't cwy," said Puck; "I don't mind goin' to bed if you come too. Take the fwog, an' put him in the pail — I can't hold him, he wiggles so."

"Is it cold in there?" demanded Posy, after vainly stretching across the space between her and the drenched figure. "Cause I guess I'll come in and bring the pail. I'll have to go to bed *anyway*," despairingly, "and I sha'n't forsake my brother if he gets punished." With which Spartan resolve, little Miss Posy pulled her white skirt daintily around her waist, and deliberately waded in to Puck's assistance.

She did not like it much however; Blot splashed her, thinking it was a great frolic, and the stones at the bottom were slippery, and although Posy wasn't afraid of frogs, she did have a dread of snakes. But she was a valiant little soul, and a perfect slave to Puck, so she laughed, quaveringly, and made believe she liked it, until an eel glided out of the weeds near her, and frightened her pretty much out of her wits.

"O — o — o!" squealed she. "We shall be killed — O, you naughty, bad boy — you branged me, and we'll be eaten up just like the bears eated up the children that ran after the bald-headed Nehemiah."

"It wasn't Nehemiah — it was Elijah," cried Puck,

scrambling out after her, nearly as much alarmed as she was, but disdaining to own the fact. "An' you said 'branged' too, an' that ain't right."

"What is?" demanded Posy, whose correct propriety of speech was held up as a model for her brother, who, of course, was delighted when he caught her tripping.

"Brunged," corrected Puck, whose past participles were always of a most remarkable description.

"'Tain't any such thing," quoth Posy, bobbing her head indignantly. "I know what it is; it 's *bringed.* And Elijah was the prophet whom the ravens fed, and I'm going right home to tell Aunt Debby that you forgetted your last Sunday's lesson — so now!"

"I'll give you the gween fwog all to your own self," called Puck, relenting because he wished to put off the day of punishment as long as possible. But Posy was wrathful at the recollection of stumbling in her speech, so she trotted off, bobbing her head very fast, and Puck, whistling for Blot, took up his pail with his beloved captive frog, and followed her meditating whether he would be put to bed without his dinner or not.

In this guise the demoralized party appeared before Aunt Debby and grandma, making wet tracks across the hall and besprinkling the matting plentifully. With many sobs Posy told the story, but her generous heart smote her when she saw Aunt Debby's eye glance from Puck to the closet where she kept a little rod which was used only for the heaviest sins.

"He 's very sorry," — cried Posy. "Grandma, please ask Aunt Debby to put us to bed and *not* to whip Puck. I wetted my own self — I did, truly."

Mrs. Frost, a lovely old Quakeress, with the most placid of faces under her plain muslin cap, laid down her knitting at this appeal.

"What does thee say, Posy?"

"Puck never once thought of his bran new stockings till I told him, grandma, and we'll never go down to the frog pond again."

"Give up my gween fwogs!" cried Puck, with a dismal howl. "I'd wather be spanked twice over. Come on, Aunt Debby; I wont holler vewy bad this time."

Grandma smiled at this heroic announcement. "Puck, come here. If I ask Aunt Debby to let thee off, wilt thou promise to be good to morrow? Thee sees, children must conform, and Posy and thee are full of mischief."

"But it 's dwefful hard to confowm," said Puck, sighing deeply. "An' we mus' go out to play, or sumpin,' for nobody wants us 'round here, seems to me. Sylvy 's washin,' an' Chloe 's mad 'cause I let on the water all over the floor to make the wat wun out, and Cato 's gone out in the wagon, an' Jim 's diggin' taters, an' Dowa wont let us come in her woom" — another sigh ended this pathetic account of his own and Posy's woes.

"I think I will only put you to bed this time," said Aunt Debby, exchanging a glance with grandma, "but you must stay there until tea-time, and I shall not give you any pudding for your dinners. Lemon pudding," added she, as the faces before her lengthened dolefully. "And the next time you get into such a mess, or let Posy wet herself like this, Puck, I'll whip you with the new stick which Cato got for me yesterday."

With which awful threat Aunt Debby took the children by the hand and whisked them out of the room so fast, that they were quite breathless and panting from their exertions to keep up with her when they reached the nursery.

"I declare, Aunt Debby makes me feel tired; she hur-

ries so," said Dora Lyndon, putting her head out from the window curtain where she had been hiding during this little scene, being fearful that she might be sent up to put the children to bed. She was a pretty, lackadaisical looking girl of eighteen, very indolent and pleasure-loving, a temperament which exasperated energetic Aunt Debby and was the text for many a severe lecture to Dora.

"Thee doesn't trouble thyself to take many extra steps, Dora," said Grandma Frost, reprovingly. Dora shrugged her shoulders, but she seldom answered grandma impatiently, so she settled herself to the paper-covered novel again, and made no reply.

Aunt Debby came down after a while, with a gratified face.

"I've settled it," said she: "that is, I've thought of a plan which, if you approve of, grandma, will be just the thing for those children. They bother my life out. The negro servants are not fit companions for them, and I can't have them under my feet all the time. It 's just as Puck says, poor child — 'nobody 'round seems to want him,' and that 's not fair to the children. He 's eight years old now, going on nine, and Posy 's five; quite old enough to be learning something. So I've been thinking that if we could get a nice, reliable young girl as a sort of nursery governess it would be an excellent plan. What do you think?"

"A governess?" said grandma, in rather a bewildered tone.

"Yes," said Aunt Debby, more slowly, for she knew that Mrs. Frost disliked to be hurried, and always wanted to talk a matter over in all its bearings before giving her opinion.

"Dora might do something, but, bless you! she won't raise a finger even, to keep them out of mischief."

"Don't abuse me, Aunt Debby," said Dora, half laughing.

"O, you're there, are you? Well, I said nothing behind your back that I'd be ashamed to say to your face. And beside, I don't think you've either the patience or the knowledge to teach them well."

"Thank you," said Dora, in a deeply offended tone.

"It 's true ; it takes a regular training to know how to teach, and you haven't had it. And the children are just running wild," said Aunt Debby, in quiet exasperation. "If we only had a few good common schools — such as we have in Massachusetts — I'd pack them off fast enough, but what we did have down here have gone to wreck and ruin. The best one in these parts was kept by that Yankee down at the Run, and the war drove him off — or the secessionists, I dont know which."

"Good riddance," said Dora, angrily. "We don't want any old abolitionists down here."

"Dora Lyndon, you just wait till your opinion is asked for, and don't be giving your grandma and me any of the ridiculous fire-eating notions you've got in your silly head since you came back from that visit to Richmond. We believe in God and the Union in this house," said Aunt Debby, rearing her head with the spirit and obstinacy of her Puritan ancestors, "and I don't wish to hear any Jeff Davis principles from you."

"Dora, I am surprised at thee!" said grandma, her mild eye flashing as she tapped the table with her knitting-needle. "Does thee dare to talk against abolition when thee knows that I and all the Friends abhor slavery? Never let me hear thee speak thus again," and grandma looked as if she meant to be obeyed.

"I didn't mean anything to you, ma'am," Dora had

the grace to say, as she vanished again behind her curtain.

"What did thee think about the children, Debby?" asked grandma, after a pause, during which Aunt Debby wisely held her peace and waited.

"Of course, there's nobody around here who would answer; they're all too fine ladies for that," said she, meaningly. "What I thought of was this. It's very probable that among the two or three girls whom Cousin Louisa Moulton has been educating for teachers in her school she may have one, or know of one, who would be willing to come here. We are on the Border, and perhaps she could send us some one who would answer the purpose."

Grandma reflected for some moments, and Aunt Debby sat in silence, sewing up a long seam with rapid fingers.

"It might be a good plan," said grandma, cautiously. "But what would thee have to pay a young girl, Debby? Thee knows we cannot afford much" —

"I know," said Aunt Debby, hastily. "But I've a small sum of my own which has been lying for some time in Cousin Lemuel's hands, and it might as well go for this as anything else. I can't have Reuben's children running wild if I can stop it," and a tear gathered on Aunt Debby's eyelashes which she instantly winked away.

"It's very good of thee," said grandma, with a gratified look at the angular figure. "*Very* considerate, Debby, and the Lord will reward thee. Certainly I have no objection to thy plan; it seems a very sensible one. Thee had better write thy letter, and let Cato take it when he goes to the mill; give my love to Louisa, and ask her if she hears any news of Cousin Solomon's family."

Thus admonished, Aunt Debby drew out an old-fashioned writing table, and with great pains and labor indited a letter to Mrs. Moulton, undeterred by Dora's frowns and muttered expostulations. That young lady evidently did not look with favor upon the plan, and was only consoled by the reflection that perhaps nobody would be willing to come, or if some deluded girl did accept the situation, she would at least have the benefit of hearing what the new Philadelphia fashions were from her, and perhaps get an idea for making over her black silk dress.

When Aunt Debby went up to release the culprits confined in the nursery she found that Posy was playing her favorite play of "long baby" (as she called it), arrayed in one of Dora's best night gowns, and that Puck, prancing around in his little toga, had administered molasses and water as medicine to the sick baby, and, not content with spilling part of the dose on the counterpane, had made a large spot on the carpet. In addition to these small mishaps, in climbing on a broken chair he had run a splinter into his little bare foot, and Posy, with tears in her large blue eyes, sat on the edge of the bed trying to probe the wound with her aunt's best button-hole scissors.

"I declare to mercy," ejaculated that much-enduring relative, as she rescued her scissors, and sat down to attend to the urchin's foot, "you're the greatest pair of monkeys I ever had the pleasure of knowing. But I'll have somebody to see to you and make you mind before long!" and wagging her head with a mysterious look which drove the children wild with curiosity, she kissed them both heartily, and sent for Silvy to dress them for tea.

CHAPTER XVI.

TABLEAUX.

"GO up to Miss Daisy's room, Maggie, and ask her when she has finished dressing to come to me. And when she is ready to go, put on your bonnet and shawl and walk over to Mr. Clive's with her."

Mrs. Moulton was sitting in her little study, a place of awe and mystery to her unruly scholars, but a pleasant retreat to the older pupils who loved their governess dearly. To do Mrs. Moulton justice, there were few of her little flock to whom the epithet of unruly would long be applicable, for she was a born teacher, and her gentle firmness and strong good sense made her much beloved by every one who came under her magic sway.

The servant had been gone but a few moments when a little tap on the door was followed by a voice which said,—

"Did you want me, Mrs. Moulton? I was all ready when the message came, but I stayed long enough to put my picturesque rags in a basket."

"Picturesque rags? Come in, Daisy, and tell me what you mean?"

A slender figure, in a very simple white dress, with a tiny blue bow at the throat, came toward her. The same child's face, with its innocent, wistful eyes, clouded now and then with the old, pathetic pain; the same soft yellow hair and delicate skin, with the broad brow and determined mouth; it was Marjorie's very childish self who took the seat which Mrs. Moulton drew toward her, and who looked quietly up into that lady's face.

"I meant my dress for the tableau," said Marjorie, smiling. "Phebe left a bundle of what I call picturesque rags here this morning with a message that I must see if they 'fitted.'"

"I remember now; these are the tableaux for the Sanitary Commission, are they not? But I sent for you, dear, to talk over a little business; I thought you might have an opportunity of speaking to Mr. Clive and Virginia about it to-night."

"Yes, ma'am," said Marjorie, wonderingly, as her teacher paused.

"I have received a letter from a cousin of mine, who resides in Virginia with that dear old Mrs. Frost of whom you have often heard me speak. She brought me up when a little girl (she resided in Philadelphia then), and there is no one whom I love more fondly. Her niece, Miss Deborah, has written to ask me whether I can send her a young girl as governess for Mrs. Frost's little grandchildren, and, Daisy, in many ways it seems to be just the opening that you need."

"I am so glad!" Marjorie clasped her hands eagerly.

"They are only little children," said Mrs. Moulton, smiling down at her, "and, Miss Debby writes, very mischievous and bright. I did not mean to have you go quite so early, but it strikes me that this would be such a good beginning. You told me you did not want too large children to commence with, and I think you are wise. The family I know to be kind, Christian people, and the salary that Miss Debby offers is a good one. There is one drawback, however; do you object to going South during war times? Debby writes me that, so far, they have been unmolested, and the plantation is out of the direct line, five miles from Deepwater Run, which, itself, is a place of no importance."

"I am not afraid," said Marjorie; "but I must ask Mr. Clive first. I shall be so glad to be earning *something*."

Marjorie's eyes were tearful now, and Mrs. Moulton patted the cheek nearest her kindly.

"My dear child, I am sure we shall not be disappointed in you. I am glad that you are pleased at the idea of going to the Frosts. I wanted to lay it before you immediately, as Miss Debby tells me of an opportunity of sending you there with a neighbor who has come to Philadelphia on business. Give my love to Virginia, and ask her to drive down in the morning and talk this over with me. Go and enjoy yourself, Daisy, and give me a full account of the tableaux to-morrow."

Mrs. Moulton kissed her pupil as she wrapped a shawl around her, and calling Maggie, saw them safely out of the door.

Mr. Clive's house was brilliantly lit, and as Marjorie rang the bell, Phebe darted out of the library to meet her.

"Glad you'se come, Miss Daisy; run right up-stairs to Miss Ginny's room. The other folks is dressing in de third story."

Marjorie gave Phebe her basket, and mounted the stairs with light feet.

Pretty Virginia was Mrs. Randolph now, as fair and blooming a young wife as one can imagine. Phebe's shrewd predictions had come to pass at last, although it was sadly annoying to the faithful nurse to find that the grand wedding which she had hoped to rejoice in had to be given up for a far different affair. For the breath of war had touched Virginia's life, as it did so many other tender maidens, and she was married on the very eve of her gallant young husband's departure for the front.

Fred Randolph had marched away with the New York Seventh when that regiment first departed, and the misery that Virginia endured during the six weeks of their absence made her resolve that she could not have Fred leave her thus again. But he came home with the firm intention of volunteering, and when it came to the point, Virginia could not find it in her heart to bid him stay. So they were married, and half of the first year of her married life Virginia spent in camp; the other half, between hope and fear, at home. But she kept her bright, brave faith through all, and was her father's comforter and Marjorie's most loving friend during the trying times that followed. At last, Fred was wounded in one of the great battles at the West, and sent home, as he declared, "just battered enough to be nursed;" and now, with her husband so much better, Virginia (active as ever) launched vigorously into the Sanitary Commission, and got up a private entertainment of tableaux which bid fair to bring plenty of money into the hands of that honored institution.

"Is that you, Daisy?" called out Captain Randolph, as Marjorie put her head in at the door. "Here 's this wife of mine grown such a tyrant that I had some doubts whether she'd let me come down-stairs to witness the grand performance. What business has Queen Mary of Scotland with tying up the arm of a wounded soldier of the nineteenth century?"

"You should try to imagine that you are George of Douglass and mean to assist the poor queen's escape," said Marjorie, stooping to kiss Virginia as she knelt on the floor, looking wonderfully handsome in her rich costume of Queen of Scots. "I'm so glad to find you alone for a few moments, Mrs. Randolph. I want to tell you some news."

"Many thanks," said Captain Randolph, in pretended wrath. "I count for nobody, do I?"

"Never mind his nonsense," said Virginia. "What is it, dear? Any new scholars?"

"Yes, I hope so," said Marjorie, with a little mischief in her laugh. "But they're *my* scholars, this time, Mrs. Randolph. I've heard of a situation."

"Daisy! I thought that the last time that governess plan of yours was mentioned we agreed that it was not feasible?"

"But I think this one is," said Marjorie, in her voice of gentle, modest determination.

"You'd better look after that girl," said Captain Randolph, nodding his head, fiercely. "I always told you she'd take the bit in her teeth some day, and she looks now as if she had pretty tight hold of it."

Virginia and Marjorie both laughed at this sally, and then the story of Mrs. Moulton's letter was told as succinctly as possible. Mrs. Randolph shook her head a little, however, when she heard where Marjorie proposed to go, and asked her husband's opinion.

But Captain Randolph did not seem to think the locality particularly dangerous, as indeed it had not at that time proved to be. He said he would not give any advice in the matter, and evidently admired Marjorie's spirit in wishing to try to support herself.

"We can't decide anything until I have told papa, and have talked over the matter with Mrs. Moulton," said Virginia. "Daisy — I declare, you're not dressed. What a child: run away to Phebe, and when you are ready you will find me in the breakfast room. Fred, if you don't behave with more dignity, my ruff will be utterly ruined," and Queen Mary with difficulty extricated herself from his enthusiastic embrace.

The large parlors were closely packed with spectators, most of them fashionables, and the tableaux which Virginia's exquisite taste had arranged were pronounced very fine, and were loudly applauded. Marjorie did not make her appearance until the last but one.

"What is this?" asked Mrs. Saunderson, putting her eye-glass to her eye in a most affected manner.

"'Motherless' is the name on the programme," said her daughter, Minnie; "Virginia said it was after a picture of some celebrated modern painter in Rome. She was very mysterious about it — I don't know who appears in it. Let me take the glass, Mr. Rogers; why! it 's that Daisy Russell."

The tableau was a very simple one. Only a girl's face — a girl hardly more than a child — inside a curiously carved old picture frame; the bare shoulder which peeped through a hole in the old calico dress was white and dimpled, and one small hand strove to hold the tatters together.

But the simple pathos of the wonderful gray eyes — the hungry, wistful droop of the little sad mouth — ah! it was the same motherless look which had gone to Virginia's heart on the day when she first saw her which looked out of Marjorie's eyes then. There was a pause of mute admiration; then, the bit of real life went home to everybody 's heart, and the audience applauded vigorously as the curtain fell.

"Can you tell me who that is?" said Mr. Rogers, passing his handkerchief nervously across his face.

"It 's a poor child whom Mr. Clive and Mrs. Randolph are educating," said Mrs. Saunderson.

"Then she isn't — any relation?" gasped the gentleman, in a choked voice. Mrs. Saunderson stared.

"Certainly *not*. I said she was a poor child whom Mrs. Randolph had picked up somewhere. The Clives are among our very best families, sir."

Mr. Rogers murmured something about "not meaning any harm," and dropped helplessly back in his chair, not venturing to say another word for full five minutes; but the lady took occasion to whisper to her daughter, "The man is either drunk or crazy. I wish Harry would not send letters by such very peculiar brother officers."

"You know they meet all sorts of people in the army," suggested Minnie, feeling rather sorry for the man's apparent awkwardness. So she turned about, being a kind-hearted girl in the main, and gave their escort a short history of Virginia's protegé. Mr. Rogers did not seem as much interested, however, as his previous behavior would have led her to suppose, and he looked actually relieved when he saw the audience rise to depart.

"That was a nearish shave," thought Rogers to himself, as he went down the steps with the ladies. "I was awfully frightened. What a fool I am not to remember that those Clives lived here. I must be losing my mind. It 's lucky the host didn't see me — I'd be afraid of his sharp eyes, even in my wig, with all these whiskers. *Can* that be the child? The breathing image of her mother. Am I never to be free from being haunted by that woman?"

Virginia, who had been in the last tableau, came out to look for Marjorie and her father. She found them both in earnest conversation, and the traces of tears on Marjorie's face told that she had been pleading her own cause.

"Do you know that this child is rabid on the subject of getting her own living?" said her father, drawing her down on the sofa beside him. "What am I to say to her?"

"I think we must let her try it, papa," said Virginia, reading his face with her usual quickness. "The governess plan is one that is very near Daisy's heart, and it is so much better to have her make her first attempt among people whom we know about."

"I remember old Mrs. Frost very well," said Mr. Clive. "She must be almost ninety years of age now. Well, Daisy, if Virginia thinks it best and Mrs. Moulton also, I suppose I must be overruled. But remember this, child — if you don't like it, or if you get into any trouble, my house is always open for you. You're a good child, and I don't want you to go away."

This was so very unusual an outburst for Mr. Clive that Marjorie's only answer was a sob.

"I don't think any homeless girl ever had such kind friends," she whispered, gratefully. But Mr. Clive couldn't abide thanks, so he told her not to be foolish, and that the carriage should take her back to Mrs. Moulton's, and hurried off to find it.

"I'll come and see you to-morrow," said Virginia, as they kissed each other good-night. "Mind you tell Mrs. Moulton what a success my tableaux were. Thank you for your share, Daisy; if you only could have seen yourself!"

But Marjorie did not give much thought to the tableaux, which, under less exciting circumstances, would have absorbed her attention, for she was wholly taken up in thinking of her new prospects and the two little pupils who were waiting for her down in Virginia.

But the next morning wore away and brought no Virginia. Marjorie began to be quite worried by dinner time, and was meditating the propriety of running down to Mr. Clive's to find out the reason of this delay, when

Mrs. Randolph's carriage drove up. And the moment she entered the parlor Marjorie saw that something unusual had occurred.

"I could not get away before," said Virginia, greeting Mrs. Moulton affectionately. "Late last night, just after you left, Daisy, we had a telegram from Uncle Percy to say that poor old Grandpa Clive is dead. He died in a fit, very suddenly, and papa has gone on for the funeral. I have been packing all the morning — that isn't all," and sudden tears rushed into the brave brown eyes; "Fred is ordered away, and I am afraid I can't keep him longer than next week."

"See what it is to be a soldier's wife in war times," said Mrs. Moulton, pressing the hand that lay in hers.

"Yes," Virginia said, checking a sigh. "But I came to talk about Daisy's plans. Let me see the letter."

Mrs. Moulton gave it to her, and Virginia entered into the subject with her usual warm, winning interest, putting aside her own wishes, which led her to cling to the young girl whom she had grown to love so dearly. Particularly just now, with Fred going away, she felt that Marjorie's affection would be a very great comfort; but when she saw how ardently the scheme had been wished for by her protegé, she would not express the wish to have her give it up, which would have had such weight with Marjorie. So, while her two kind friends talked over every detail, Marjorie sat listening, building golden castles in the air, and thinking how delightful it would be to earn some money for herself.

As Marjorie had grown stronger in health during these six years, she had ceased to feel the terror which her loss of memory had formerly caused her. Many a night had she lain awake trying to connect the few broken links

which she could remember, and strongest among these was the remembrance of Judge Gray, or, as she called him to herself, "The man who taught me 'The Night before Christmas.'" Singularly enough, while she could recollect every word of the poem, she could not recall Judge Gray's name or the name of the city where he lived. But his face, with its beautiful hazel eyes, and kind, merry smile was often before her. "I shall meet him some day," she would say to herself, "and then, perhaps I shall remember all the rest." Barney, also, was one of the people of her dream-world; but fancy transformed him into her attendant, although she could not reconcile the fact that when he was with her she did not seem to remember her mother. She finally settled upon the idea that he must have been a steward on the ship whose tossing she recalled so distinctly. But the dream and the hope of some day finding her father was fondly cherished by Marjorie, although it seemed as vague as ever. One link had come back which made the Clives think that there was something very mysterious about her. About six months after her going to Philadelphia, Mr. Percy Clive forwarded from New York a small parcel, which he said had been left with one of his clerks by a poor woman who showed one of their business cards, and said she had been told to leave word there by the gentleman who gave it to her. She left no message except to say that "Nancy" left the parcel, and it belonged to "little Mary" — the gentleman would know whom she meant. On opening the box it was found to contain a string of small gold beads, from which two or three had been taken. Marjorie persisted that "Barney" gave them to her; the poor child's memory was so confused that it was impossible for her to separate the two

changes in her history, and she confounded the beads with the bracelet which Barney had really given her. She never wore the necklace, but she would take it out sometimes, and gaze at it with dreamy eyes, hoping, as the months rolled by, that each one would bring the past more clearly to her.

Virginia and Mrs. Moulton settled their plans at last; and Marjorie was delighted to find that she would probably go on as far as Washington with Captain Randolph. There was a good deal to be done, and many stitches to be taken in Marjorie's wardrobe, and Virginia offered Phebe's services, and begged for all Marjorie's spare time.

But the last stitch was taken, the little trunk packed with loving hands by Phebe, who wished she was going "down Souf with Missy Daisy;" and with many kisses and prayers Marjorie went away, like the children in the fairy tales, to seek her fortune, thereby unconsciously taking the first step in the path which was to lead her to her father.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CLOUD BEGINS TO LIFT.

MR. PERCY CLIVE sat in a small corner room of the old-fashioned house at Craignest, with a large secretary open before him. He was a pleasant-faced, gentlemanly looking man with a fresh complexion and fair hair, which made him look fully five years younger than his real age, and, with a strong family likeness to his eldest brother, had none of the sternness which generally characterized Selden Clive's face when in repose. Opposite him in a careless, easy fashion, sat a gentleman in the prime of life, in the undress uniform of a general. But his handsome face had many lines of care upon it, and there was a look of sadness in the deep-set gray eyes which told of care and sorrow, and although ten years his brother's junior, General Clive's hair had, here and there, a silver thread in its luxuriant brown waves.

"It is a great pity that Selden was obliged to return directly to Philadelphia," said Percy Clive, laying down the bundle of papers which he had been carefully looking over. "I have such confidence in his cool, clear head; I don't think you ever appreciated him, George."

"I ought to," said General Clive, with a smile that was half mournful. "He was always held up to me as a model by my father, and I was exhorted to imitate him in everything."

"You assimilate about as well as oil and water," said his brother. "I can assure you, however, that Selden is as deeply disappointed as I am with father's will. We

hoped so much from his kindly reception of you on your return from China. I can't understand why the old gentleman did not alter his will at that time, and Selden is convinced that there is a codicil somewhere. If not," Mr. Clive looked embarrassed and averted his pleasant face, — "if not, Selden and I mean to make it up to you. You shall have your share of father's estate."

"That 's like you, Percy," said General Clive, laying his hand affectionately on his brother's shoulder; "and very generous of Selden, but I cannot let you carry out your kind intentions. I have enough of my own hard-earned dollars, and should only be glad of some token that my father had really forgiven me. But he was implacable to the very last it seems; what an iron will he had."

"But he loved you best of us all," said Mr. Clive, "and that is why I cannot but believe — stop! This looks marvelously like it, by Jove!"

General Clive sprang out of his chair with an excited face as his brother unfolded the legal looking paper in his hand.

"I give and bequeath," so ran the codicil, after the usual formula, "to Marjorie, the eldest child of my son George Clive, and Madeline Hervé his wife, one third of my personal property, to wit" (then followed a long list of stocks and money amounting to several hundred thousand dollars); "the same because of my great injustice to the said Madeline Hervé Clive on the night of December 3rd, 18—; and I hereby charge my sons and executors to institute search for her whether alive or dead, my own efforts having proved unavailing. And I hereby make the above bequest as token of forgiveness to my son, George Clive, whom by a previous will I have disinherited."

"Great Heavens!" cried Mr. Percy Clive, startled out of his calm demeanor by a heavy fall. "The fellow 's fainted!"

He flew to the bell and pulled it violently, and began to undo his brother's cravat with agitated hands. "Run for some brandy," cried he, as an aged servant opened the door, with a scared countenance. "General Clive has been taken ill, Robert — some water, quick!"

But joy rarely kills, and before long General Clive sat upright and waved away the brandy in extreme agitation.

"Why did I not know this sooner?" asked he. "My darling Madeline!" and he hid his face, and sobbed aloud as the image of his young wife came up before him. Old Robert twitched the sleeve of Mr. Percy Clive's coat as he stood behind him.

"Did ye find the paper you were looking for, sir?" asked the Scotchman, cautiously, in a whisper. "Because I'm thinking it had something to do with the lady."

Low as the words were spoken General Clive caught them.

"What 's that, Robert?" said he, eagerly, raising his head. Robert had lived with old Mr. Clive in various capacities for thirty years, and it was highly probable that he might be able to throw some light on the matter.

"I was only asking Mr. Percy if he found the bit paper, sir. Mr. Selden asked me last night before he left, if I could tell where the auld master kept his most valuable papers, and I made answer that it was in the secretary, mair because I'd seen him putting papers there the day before he was taken, sir. And six months agone,

James, and Mrs. Mackensie, and me pit our names until a sort of will, — at least, the auld gentleman said so, when we signed."

"And pray, why didn't you say as much when the will was read after the funeral?" asked General Clive, angrily.

"How did I know, sir?" said Robert, respectfully. "I thought the whole wad be there, and it was only when Mr. Selden put some questions to me that I began to think the last one was missing."

"What was that you said about the lady?" continued General Clive.

"I'd not want to be interfering," said Robert to Mr. Percy Clive, as the more reasonable of the two. "But I mind the night she came here verra weel, and of late my master set me to make inquiries around about."

"Tell me the whole story," said Mr. Clive, glancing towards his brother, and receiving an impatient affirmative gesture.

"It was a verra cold night in December," said Robert, feeling very important in having such interested listeners; "or, rather it was late in the afternoon, just after the master's dinner, and snowing hard. I was coming through the hall with the candles, when the bell rang suddenly; I put the lights on the bracket, and went to open the door. On the step was a lady holding a little girl in her arms, and she looked very pale and faint like, and asked in a low voice, 'Is Mr. Clive at home?' She spoke like a foreigner, sir, with a sort of hesitating manner as if she was uncertain of her words."

"I bid the lady walk in, and was throwing open the parlor door, when she stopped me.

"'Is Mr. Clive there?' she said, timidly.

"'No, ma'am,' said I, quite surprised. 'I was going to call him if you will walk in and give me your name.'

"She rubbed her hands across each other with a sort of nervous fright, and said, 'If you please — would you be so vera good as to take me right away to his room.'

"'But I can't, ma'am,' said I; 'it would vex my master very much.'

"'Let me come with you, then,' said she, pleadingly. 'I am very ill; I got off a sick bed to come here, and if he knows who I am I fear he will not see me.'

"So I told her to come along behind me as I went in with the lights, and asked what name would I say."

Robert paused, and glanced with some pity toward General Clive. "Go on!" said he, with a groan.

"It was your wife, Mr. George," said the old servant. "She gave me her name, Mrs. George Clive, and for a moment I was afraid to go, for my master had forbidden me to speak of you from the day he heard of your marriage. But she looked so pretty and sweet, and her hands trembled so, and the little girl kept saying, 'Are you cold, mamma? are you cold?' in such a winning way that I thought maybe my master's heart would melt at the sight of his ain kin; so I just marched on, and threw open this vera door, sir, and put on as bold a face as I dared as I set the candles down. Mr. Clive looked up at me and the two who followed me, as I said, —

"'If you please, sir, Mrs. George Clive.'

"The auld gentleman dropped back in his chair as if he had gotten his death-blow at the name. Then his face got fairly purple (I was afraid he'd burst a blood-vessel, Mr. Percy); and he said in an awful, choked voice, 'I know nobody of that name. Take this impostor away, Robert.'

"But the lady never flinched. She only loosened her hold of the child's hand, and at a nod of her head, the little girl ran forward and tried to take Mr. Clive's hand.

"'Won't you give Marjorie a kiss?' said she, lifting up her pretty little face.

"That was your mother's name, Mr. George, and I think it made your father pause, for although he gave the little girl a push which almost made her fall, he says to me, 'Go out of the room, Robert, and shut the door.'

"So I set down my other candle, and out I walked, but I went no further than the foot of the staircase, and from there I could hear the sound of voices; Mr. Clive's, harsh and awful, and the sweet foreign voice, sometimes clear, sometimes sobbing. In less than half an hour my master's bell rang furiously, and when I opened the door to answer it he looked years older, it seemed to me.

"'Take these people out,' said he, in a voice like thunder, 'and never let them inside my door again.'

"'I shall never come,' cried the lady, passionately, "'where my husband has been treated so cruelly. We will go, my child,' and she swept into the hall, Mr. George, with her big, beautiful eyes flashing, as grand a lady as I ever saw.

"But when she got outside, sir, and the door was closed, her strength all left her, and she all but fell in a chair.

"She was so wan and pale that I was sair frightened, and I ran for a sup of wine, and made her taste it. But as soon as she revived a bit, not a drop more would she swallow.

"'It would choke me,' she said, pushing it away with the saddest smile I ever saw. I did all I could, Mr. George; I begged her to come out intil the housekeeper's room and bide awhile till the storm spent itself, for it

"SHE SWEPT INTO THE HALL."

was a cruel night for a young, delicate woman to be out, let alone the child; but she would not hear to it. So, after she'd rested a bit she got up and went to the door. Such a blast of wind and snow come in that I made her promise to bide a wee, till I could run up intil Mrs. Mackensie's room and ask her for the gift of a shawl to wrap around the child, who was but thinly clad. As it was for her baby, she said she would wait, and I ran up and told Mrs. Mackensie that Mr. George's young wife was below, and going to be turned out in the storm.

"'I've nothing to give her,' said Mrs. Mackensie, 'saving a broché shawl of Mrs. Clive's which she gave me years ago. The border of it 's good, and the shawl 's warm, but it 's so dirty in the centre that I put it away to give till the first poor woman came along, and what better use could it be put to than wrapping up Mr. George's child?'

"Mrs. Mackensie gave me the shawl, and I ran down with it, and gave it to the lady, telling her 'twas one of old Mrs. Clive's. But she did not pay much attention, only asked which was the nearest road to Saybrooke. I showed her, and went as far as the gate-house with her, but I'm afraid she lost the way, sir, for I have never been able to get any trace of her in Saybrooke since."

"And is this all you can tell me?" said General Clive.

"That is all, sir, I wish it was more. But indeed," added the old servant, sorrowfully, "My master was sair troubled about it in his mind, I'm thinking, and many 's the night I've heard him groan, sitting there in his chair, with the newspaper upside down before his face, and I make no doubt the thought of turning his ain kin out of doors in the storm weighed him down at the last."

"That will do, Robert," said Mr. Percy Clive, hastily,

feeling as if his brother could bear no more; "please ask Mrs. Mackensie to have lunch ready half an hour earlier than usual."

But General Clive put out his hand as the old man passed him. "Thank you, my good Robert, for your kindness to my wife and child; I shall *never* forget it."

"Tut, sir, I only did my duty — I wish it had been more," said Robert, greatly touched by the agitated voice and kindly smile of him whom he still styled "the young master."

"What do you propose to do?" said Percy Clive after a while, watching his brother as he walked up and down the room, plunged in deep thought.

"Do?" fairly shouted the impetuous General. "Do? Scour the country for a trace of my child."

"It was a sad pity that the death of your partner obliged you to wait so long before coming home, George. I'm afraid you came four years too late."

"It would have made no difference," said General Clive, sadly. "Even now I find it hard to forgive. What had Madeline done that she should suffer for my sake? I must have been lying ill at your house, at that very time. If I could only find that scoundrel, Rodman, I might lay my hand on the very key-note of this mystery. He *must* know something; he was the only person who could. It's a sad pity that you turned him adrift just after my arrival, for I could otherwise have laid my hand on him when I recovered. I must put all the forces that I can muster at work to find him if he be still alive," and General Clive turned pale at the bare possibility of the death of a man upon whom he believed so much depended.

"Don't be too sanguine," said his brother.

"I shall try not to be; but O, Percy, can you realize what a hungry longing I have carried all these years for my wife and child? Can you wonder that the hope, faint as it is, of once more seeing my little Marjorie should fill my heart with joy?"

"And you have my heartiest, warmest wishes for your success, my dear fellow," cried Percy Clive, his warm heart getting the better of his worldly wisdom. "And in any, or *every* way you may command my services in your search."

"I know that," said his brother, with equal heartiness. "And I may have to call upon you almost immediately, for my leave expires on Saturday, and in the present state of affairs, I cannot ask for an extension. We may assume the aggressive at any moment, and I must be with my command. But, if I leave here to-night, I shall have two days at my disposal, and I shall take up the faint clew that Robert gives me, and see if I can find any trace of my wife and child hereabouts. Wynn is the nearest place; we will begin there."

"I don't agree with you. With our own unassisted efforts we cannot hope to accomplish much"—

"What do you advise?" burst in General Clive.

"I should go to Saybrooke. It 's a sleepy town, but the largest of them all, and they have some pretensions to a police force there."

"To Saybrooke, then," cried his brother, impetuously. "Order James and the horses to drive us over, while I go and pack my valise. How far is it? Twenty miles? We can get there by seven o'clock with respectably fast driving; the stage route would drive me frantic just now."

Mr. Clive shook his head a little as he sat down before the secretary, after his brother left the room.

The codicil lay open before him, and he read it over again, carefully. It was written in the crabbed, peculiar hand of his father, the signature firm as ever, although the old man had passed his eightieth year. He must have been convinced of the existence of the child or he would hardly have willed the property to her absolutely, without reserve. Could there be a memorandum of any sort in the package where the codicil was found? The thought struck Mr. Clive suddenly, and he immediately began to ransack the pigeon-hole where the other papers had been. His father had a peculiar way of jotting down stray ideas as they came into his mind, and it had increased upon him as he began to grow forgetful; often, during Percy Clive's visits to him, the old gentleman would point to a corner of his dressing-table where lay square and three-cornered bits of paper with all manner of memoranda on them. They had found several heaps of these queer-shaped papers stowed away in various receptacles since his death, and it struck Mr. Clive that some information might be gathered from them.

But the pigeon-holes did not contain any, and Mr. Clive opened the topmost of the row of drawers, determined to overlook the whole before mentioning his idea to his brother.

The first drawer was full of leases, the next held law-papers, but the third looked more promising. It was evidently used for odds and ends; first came an old snuff-box, then a pocket diary, but that merely contained jottings of daily household expenditures. Then there was a little bundle of very stale winter-green lozenges, a pair of rusty looking spectacles, and underneath the whole, four or five of the scraps of paper which Mr. Clive was looking for.

No. 1 was, — "Mem. To have timothy sowed in the five-acre pasture."

No. 2. "Mem. Sold the brown colt; Percy must see to the payment."

No. 3. "Mem. Paid Mrs. Mackensie ten dollars over her quarter's wages."

No. 4. "Mem. Send Robert to Saybrooke to inquire what foundling child was at the 'Saybrooke Arms,' the winter of 18—."

"Jove!" and Mr. Clive brought his hand down with a bang that set the secretary shaking as if it had a sudden ague. "That was a brilliant thought of mine. Are there any more?"

But his further search was of no avail, neither was his exploration of all the drawers in his father's room upstairs. Memoranda there were, in plenty, but none of it had the slightest bearing upon the case. Then he went in search of Robert, and found him in his brother's room, talking garrulously, and relating everything that he could think of about his old master's oddities.

"Did my father ever send you to Saybrooke to make inquiries about Mrs. Clive, Robert?" asked Mr. Percy Clive.

"Never, sir. All the inquiries I ever made were at Claybourne and Wynn. I never thought that the lady could have gone as far as that."

"I have found a memorandum," said Mr. Clive, putting the scrap in his brother's hand. "My father meant to send you there. Did you ever hear of any poor child who was at the tavern there? — what 's the name? O — the Saybrooke Arms."

"The Saybrooke Arms? That must be the story I heard from Sandy Ferguson," said Robert, with a face of

astonishment. "And I never suspicioned that the auld master paid any attention to that. He had a long head, ye ken; he pit two and two together and made four out of them."

"How?" said General Clive, seating himself on his valise, and resigning himself to letting the old servant take his own way of telling a story.

"Sandy lived at the tavern in Wynn for a good many years lang syne, but the man who keepit it fell intil drunken ways, and then Sandy cast about for a living. He 's an auld gossip of mine (we came from the same place, at home, in Scotland, though Sandy was a bit bairn when I came till America), and he comes over here, whiles, to see me. He 's taken up a carpenter's trade this five years gone, and I used to have him over to mend the fences and do such like repairs. And one day, a couple of months since, he was mending a chair for Mrs. Mackensie, and the auld master came along and stood a while, talking to her. I mind, now, Sandy was telling me about a man named Barney Brian who used to live in these parts, and he said he'd been very fortunate, and gotten friends in the city, because of a poor foundling child that he befriended, and I remember I asked him what child it was, and he made answer that it was na ony one in these parts; some one who had been at the Saybrooke Arms six or seven years agone. To think that auld Mr. Clive heard that!"

"And where is your friend Sandy?" asked General Clive.

"Dead," said Robert, shaking his head, mournfully. "It was na a week after that he was called. Congestion of the lungs, sir, and ye ken that takes a man awa' awful sudden."

"The end of that clew," said General Clive, in a despairing voice.

"I don't think so," said Percy Clive. "What is to prevent our going direct to the Saybrooke Arms and making inquiries. It is remarkably fortunate that we have a date to go by; if you notice, the date on this memorandum and the date of your wife's appearance here are five years apart."

"That would be it, sir," said Robert. "Sandy said it was six or seven years syne. How auld was the little girl, Mr. George?"

"Marjorie? She was between five and six when I left England. Five — ten — she will be seventeen now — my darling!" and the father's voice trembled with a sigh. "I had forgotten that these years have made her almost a woman."

"Come, George," said his brother, rousing him from the reverie into which his words had plunged him; "lunch is ready, and directly after it we will start for Saybrooke. Robert, I gave all the necessary directions to you and Mrs. Mackensie this morning. I shall be back to attend to the closing of the house for the present, in a fortnight's time."

General Clive's hopes began to revive during the journey to Saybrooke. He felt that his brother's kindly interest inspired him to fresh exertions even if this clew should fail, and they talked the whole matter over from all sides, resolving to leave no stone unturned to discover the missing child.

Saybrooke had grown into quite a flourishing town, and was beginning to talk of having a mayor, and making itself a city in time. There were three "hotels," as the proprietors ambitiously styled them, upon a much

larger scale than the old tavern which was still called the Saybrooke Arms. John Merrill's name was on the sign-post which swung invitingly before the door, and John himself, grown somewhat stout and red in the face, came out to welcome the gentlemen as they alighted.

"Why, it 's Mr. Clive of New York," said John, who had sometimes seen that gentleman on his way through Saybrooke. "Shall I have the horses put up, or are you going right on?"

"Not to-night, Mr. Merrill," said Percy Clive. "Have you any rooms to spare? My brother and I think of remaining over night with you."

"That I have," said John, greatly pleased that his guests had passed by the new hotels to take quarters in his more humble abode. "The best in the house you shall have. Supper, sir, and a bit of something hearty?"

"We won't object to as good a supper as you can give us," said Mr. Clive, smiling. "I remember Mrs. Merrill's neat table of old. This is my brother, General Clive," seeing the wish for an introduction in John's eyes, as they walked into the sitting-room.

General Clive shook hands with the landlord, who immediately improved the opportunity to ask questions about the army, the latest news from the front, in Virginia, and the probabilities of the success of the campaign in the West.

General Clive answered them all; he was pleased with the man's intelligence and stanch loyalty, but when the catechism had lasted for nearly half an hour, he gave an impatient glance at his brother, who came directly to his assistance.

"I want to ask you about your county police, Mr. Merrill," said he. "I have some investigations of a

rather delicate nature which I thought of putting in their hands. Are they efficient, or not?"

"Not above the ordinary," said John, shrewdly. "But they'd do very well to get up a case of burglary, or such. If it was a murder, now," — and he looked inquiringly at his interrogator, as if wondering how far he might venture to be curious.

"I haven't turned lawyer," said Percy Clive, laughing at the Yankee's expression. "And I don't want to 'work up a case.' But before I set out in search of a constable, I want to ask you if you remember anything of a child — a little girl — whom I have been told was at this house some time during the winter of 18— ?"

"We had no steady boarders that winter," said John, after thinking for a moment.

"My information is very slight; I do not know whether the little girl I am in search of was here with another person or not. But she came here with a man named Barney Brian" —

"Je-*ru*-salem!" shouted John, jumping out of his seat, and rushing excitedly to the door. "Mary! Mary! just come here, will you."

The gentlemen exchanged significant glances. "I hain't gone crazy just yet," said John, seeing their expression of surprise, "but my wife will want to hear this. Many a time we've speckalated about that child — here she is. Mary, here 's Mr. Clive from New York and his brother, General Clive, of the — Army Corps, wanting to know something about the little girl you had such a fancy for — Marjorie."

"Marjorie?" echoed Nurse Mary, as she courtesied respectfully to the gentlemen. "Dear soul! I've never forgotten her pretty ways."

"I want to know all you can tell me about the child," said General Clive, in a husky voice. Nurse Mary looked at him, and decided that there must be some cause for his agitation, as she told, in quite a concise way, the story of Judge Gray's having found Marjorie in the stage-coach; how he brought her to Saybrooke, and provided her with clothing, and how Mr. Stevens had taken her away.

"After that, gentlemen," said Nurse Mary, "I cannot tell you about the child, for I never heard of her but once, and then Judge Gray told me that she was well and happy in New York. The Judge is on another court now, and he has not held sessions here since that year, 18—; we have another judge in his place. Many 's the time, as John can tell you, that I 've talked of going on to see Master Reginald (he 's a grown man now), and hear all about little Marjorie, but somehow, the day never seemed to come when I could leave and I'm getting an old woman to be gadding. If I might make so bold, do you know who the child really was?"

"I am not quite sure," said Mr. Clive, with a warning look at his brother. "The name is a singular coincidence, for the child whom we are trying to find bore the old-fashioned name of Marjorie. You are sure that this little girl's name was not Margaret, or Maggie?"

"I am, sir," said Mrs. Merrill, warming to her subject with all a woman's curiosity and interest. "And there were many things about the child which made me think her better than she seemed. There was her very nice way of speaking — quite proper and dainty, like Master Reginald himself, and she got vexed whenever any one called her 'Irish.' And beside, Barney hinted to me that she was nothing to him, or to that McKeon, either, where

she had lived. And the shawl she had wrapped about her was quite too fine for such people; I've seen one of Mrs. Gray's which was very similar."

"I *will* speak, Percy," cried General Clive, who had sat in growing excitement as this conversation went on. "I am looking for my child, Mrs. Merrill! my only child, and her name was Marjorie."

"The Lord be praised!" ejaculated the good woman, tears springing to her eyes. "If anything could do my heart good it 's such news as that."

"What kind of a shawl was the one you are speaking of?" asked General Clive.

"This was white in the centre, with a border of delicate green; the border just as nice as ever, but the white was badly soiled."

"It really seems as if we had got upon the right track at last," said Mr. Clive. "I know Judge Gray by reputation; he is a judge of the Court of Appeals. We can go directly to his home and find out all about this child, George. And now Mrs. Merrill, I am very hungry, and if my brother here can live on hope, I cannot."

Nurse Mary smiled, and bustled away to get supper ready, leaving the brothers alone; talking briskly to her husband over the strange story which she half suspected must hang around Marjorie's life, as she beat up her omelet and fried the potatoes.

It was quite impossible for General Clive to be anything but restless under the excitement which hearing Mrs. Merrill's story had caused. He concluded that any reference to the Saybrooke police would be unnecessary, and made up his mind that he would go on to see Judge Gray the next day, having just so much time to spare before joining the army. Half the evening he sat talking

with Nurse Mary, hearing every little detail that she could recollect about Marjorie, the color of her hair, her sad eyes, and gentle ways; the good woman ran on unweariedly about the child. Of Barney she could say but little; he had left Wynn, and had never returned there, but the rumor of his having got on in the world, thanks to Judge Gray, had reached her.

The next day, General Clive said good-by to Saybrooke and started for Binghamton, thence to Judge Gray's.

His brother left him at Binghamton, having business which called him directly to New York, where General Clive would see him for an hour as he passed through on his way to join his command.

The hours seemed very long to the impatient father, even though he kept telling himself that perhaps disappointment was in store for him at the end of his journey. When he finally arrived at his destination he drove to an hotel, made a hasty toilet after his dusty ride, and ordered a carriage to go to Judge Gray's.

"Is this the house?" said he, to the hackman, as they stopped.

"Yes, sir, this is the place, but it looks mighty like being shut up," said the man. "Shall I pull the bell?"

But General Clive preferred to do that himself, and after several impatient rings a sleepy looking maid opened the door.

"Is Judge Gray at home?" asked General Clive.

"No sir."

"When will he be in?" asked the questioner, impatiently.

"Dade, sir, I don't know. The Judge have gone on till — wirra, but the name is beyont me, entirely, where the soldiers is any way — to see Mr. Reginald — Captain Gray, that is, his son."

"How long has he been gone?"

"Three days sure."

"Don't you know when he will return?" asked General Clive.

"I think he'll not be gone mor'an this day week, least, the other servants will be back then."

"Is there nobody here with whom I can leave a message?" asked General Clive.

"Sorra a one but me," said the girl, staring at him. "Would ye lave your name, sure? Miss Rachel has gone away on a journey, and there 's nobody here, and the parlor 's shut up, or I'd be after axing ye to walk in."

General Clive reflected a moment; then he took a card from his pocket and scribbled a line on it, —

"I called upon important business, but will write you from head-quarters, where I am ordered immediately. May I beg for an early reply to my letter."

"Give that to Judge Gray as soon as he arrives," said he; "there is no other message."

Back to the hotel, in great haste, when he found that he had just lost the sleeping-train to New York, and would be forced to wait until six o'clock in the morning. This would give him barely time to reach Washington, so he dispatched a telegram to his brother Percy, asking him to meet him at the depot on his way through New York; then he smoked, or tried to smoke a cigar, and finally, throwing it away in restless disgust, he threw himself on his bed to dream that a golden-haired girl with Madeline's own smile stood before him, and, on waking, found his cheeks wet with unwonted tears.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CAPTAIN REX.

MISS DEBBY rattled the breakfast cups, and glanced over at Dora's empty chair with a lowering brow that betokened the approach of a domestic hurricane. The eleventh commandment on her table of laws was in regard to early rising; she firmly believed that all the virtues began with getting up when the birds did. Many had been the trials of poor Miss Debby since she left her beloved Massachusetts and came to this benighted land where the very negroes loved to lie abed in the morning, and where seven o'clock breakfasts were looked upon as a relic of past ages by most of the neighborhood. Aunt Debby's cap (if she had worn one) would have long ago been lifted a few feet from the crown of her head if her favorite assurance that "such laziness made her hair stand up straight!" had been carried out. Grandma Frost was a great comfort to her in these seasons of exasperation; no matter how early the hour at which Aunt Debby elected to leave her bed and energetically proceed to fling open the doors and windows of the house and call up the servants, grandma's night-cap would be seen peering out of her door, and her mild voice heard saying, "Is that thee, Debby? Most breakfast time?"

But above all, Dora was a thorn in the flesh on this subject. Aunt Debby "declared" every morning, regularly, that her conduct, "for a grown girl, was disgraceful," and would append the satirical reflection that she'd like to see the house *she'd* keep; guessed it would do the

keeping itself! "You know very well, Dora," she would add, with indignant emphasis, "you *know* that nothing whatever can be done in a house until the breakfast things are cleared away. Servants standing around waiting, and everything going at sixes and sevens; not one blessed bit of work can I get begun until your breakfast is over. I mean to buy a cow-bell and see if that won't wake you up."

Which she did, the very next time she went in to Deep-water Run, and in her matutinal promenades for some days after, she made noise enough to awaken the seven sleepers of celebrated memory, but it only brought Puck prancing out in his little toga, in a state of rampant glee at the commotion, praying to be allowed to "wing the bell in Dowa's ears," and had no effect whatever upon the delinquent, who calmly turned over and went to sleep again as soon as the cow-bell ceased.

"Dowa ain't up yet; weckon I shall have to tend to that bell," said Puck, in a voice of mild conviction, as he saw Aunt Debby's glance.

"Don't speak with your mouth full of bread and butter, me dear," said Posy, in a funny whisper, which was perfectly audible to the rest of the company. Puck frowned at her, but was prevented from replying by a spoonful of mush and milk which nearly choked him and kept him occupied for full a minute.

"Dora never *is* ready," said Aunt Debby, sharply. "I'am glad to see that Miss Russell is punctual."

"Mrs. Moulton's study hours were early," said Marjorie, smiling brightly at her from her corner of the table. "Posy made me a call as soon as she was out of bed and that woke me."

"I should think it might," said Aunt Debby, smiling

in her turn at the gentle face opposite her. "I don't mean to have the children with you *all* the time. How did you rest last night? The dogs kept me awake for an hour, and then I heard them the first thing this morning."

"Are you sure it was the first thing, Aunt Debby," said Dora, languidly taking her seat at the table. "I heard your window go up, well, some time before dawn."

"I don't doubt it. What convenient ears you have, Dora; they never hear when I want them to. I'm afraid the coffee is cold; Uncle Cato, please get some that is hot," said Aunt Debby, whose hospitality would not allow her to give cold coffee even to Dora, unless she was later than this.

Marjorie had arrived the day before, escorted by Mr. Giles, a neighbor of the Frosts, who had brought her from Washington, not having been able to get to Philadelphia as he had anticipated at first. But Marjorie had enjoyed her journey with Captain Randolph very much, and the sight of a review of the troops at Georgetown, which happened to occur the day that she stayed over in Washington, delighted her extremely.

It seemed very strange to have permits to pass the lines, but after journeying a little further the aspect of the country grew less warlike, and Deepwater Run was the stupidest looking village imaginable, so totally unlike anything that Marjorie had ever seen at the North that she felt as if she must be in another country, and her first touch of homesickness came over her, as she realized that she was really in Virginia, and that during war times.

Puck and Posy were introduced to their gentle little governess in a very characteristic manner. Their minds had been much excited, and their imagination had exhausted itself in trying to picture what a governess looked

like ; so, upon the day that Marjorie was expected they were in a perfect twitter of excitement and implored Aunt Debby, Dora, and Silvy, in turn, to dress them in their very best Sunday clothes to do honor to Miss Russell's arrival. After they were dressed, Dora had shut both children and Blot in the nursery, and left them playing contentedly, telling them not to come down until she came for them.

Aunt Debby was standing on the front piazza, welcoming Marjorie cordially, and shaking hands with Mr. Giles, when a little bobbing head came out of the front door, and Posy's scandalized voice exclaimed, —

" I *shall* tell Aunt Debby ; it 's a girl, anyhow ; " and as Marjorie turned to look at the little figure, Posy caught hold of Miss Debby's skirt, in great excitement.

" O, Aunt Debby, what *do* you think Puck says ? He baptized my doll, Belvidera, and he gaved her a new name — *Elijah the Tishbite !* Shall she be called that when she 's a girl ? "

Marjorie sat down on the doorstep and laughed heartily, as a rebellious voice cried, from the staircase —

" Belvidewa 's a — heathen name," bump, bump, " and Aunt Debby said so " — puff, — " and Elijah the Tishbite is a *vewy* Cwishtian name, 'cause it was in the lesson — yesterday," finished Puck, triumphantly, getting to the end of the stairs and his breath at the same moment.

" Perhaps I can give you a name for her," said Marjorie, as the children brought up suddenly in front of her, and were recalled to a remembrance of politeness by Dora's warning glance.

" I'm Posy," said that little personage, introducing herself instantly, " and this is my brother, Puck. His name 's Jonathan Edwards Frost, but I never call him so 'cept when he 's an improper-behaved boy."

"You haven't called me so since the day we got dwowned in the fwog pond," said Puck. "This is Blot, my dog."

Marjorie acknowledged the presentation by a pat on the Skye terrier's head, who wagged his tail daintily in return, and immediately took refuge between the sturdy fat legs of his little master.

"He doesn't get acquainted vewy easily," said Puck, apologizing.

"This is the doll," said Posy, seeing that Dora was approaching, and being very curious to know what name her new friend could suggest. "Wasn't it very wrong of Puck to baptize her 'Elijah the Tishbite?' Now I can't take it back, can I?" and Posy looked ready to cry.

"But you can give her a nickname," interposed Marjorie, "just as you call Puck, Puck, instead of Jonathan."

"Vewy twue," quoth Puck, with solemn countenance, making up his mind that "Miss Wussell" was much prettier than Dora, who had heretofore been his ideal of beauty.

"What nickname?" demanded Posy, breathlessly.

"How do you like Seraphina? Very long ago, when I was a little girl," said Marjorie, a shadow stealing over her face, that, for a moment, made her look as if it were really very long ago to her,—"when I was a little girl I had a doll, and I called her Seraphina."

"That 's bu-ti-ful!" cried Posy, hugging Elijah the Tishbite enthusiastically; and the unconscious prophet was dubbed Seraphina from that moment.

Grandma Frost was sitting in the parlor as Marjorie entered, as beautiful a picture of an old lady as one can well imagine. In the quaint dress of a Friend, her snowy

kerchief folded across her bosom, her gray silk, and little brown shawl, just large enough to cover the shoulders and falling to the waist, with her sweet, placid face and gentle dignity, Marjorie thought she had never seen any one who impressed her so much. Grandma sat in an old-fashioned, straight-back chair, erect as ever, although she was ninety years of age, knitting in a noiseless way peculiar to herself, but she laid the work down as Marjorie advanced toward her.

"I am pleased to see thee," said the old lady, smiling. "How does thee do? Why, thee is hardly more than a child thyself. What do they call thee?"

"Daisy Russell," said Marjorie.

"Daisy? *To* be sure! Nowadays, thee sees, they call the young folks after all sorts of names; in my day, we took them from the Bible, or used the old family names of fifty years before."

"Such ugly names as they were, grandma," said Dora. "I've read them in the old Bible record, often. Aaron, Jeremiah, Eliphalet, Orchard; and then the women — Miriam, Rebecca, Mehitable, Deborah," and Dora looked mischievous she gave the last on her list.

"Good, sensible names that mean something," said Aunt Debby, emphatically.

"We made sensible women out of Rebecca and Deborah," said grandma, laughing. "But I don't think Mehitable would suit thee, Daisy; it would be a very long name for such a little body. We have droll nicknames in this house. Posy, there, for instance; her name is Helen, after her mother; but her father could not bear to hear his wife's name after her death, and the baby, thee sees, was as sweet as a garden posy, so, one day, Reuben said she should be called so. And Puck; that was some

of Dora's fanciful ideas. I cannot say that I altogether like to give up the old-fashioned 'Jonathan,' but we must conform sometimes, and by and by, when he grows older, it will be Puck's turn to be known by the family name."

"It 's dwefful hard to confowm, gwandma," said Puck, thrusting himself into the circle, and prefacing his remarks by a long-drawn sigh. "An' Jonathan ain't half so nice a name as some others. Why didn't you and papar call me Elijah the Tishbite?"

A hearty laugh from the entire company reduced Puck to a pitiful state of mystification, and grandma laughed more than anybody, on hearing the story of the doll's baptism.

As the days went on, Marjorie began to like her life at the Frosts thoroughly. The very negroes gave her a home feeling, thinking of Phebe, and they took a great liking to "li'le Missy from de Norf," as they called her. Mrs. Frost's negroes were mostly house-servants. Very many of those who had worked upon the estate had run away since the war began, and the old lady would take no steps to recover them, as she was at first urged to do by her secession neighbors. At last came the Emancipation Proclamation, and in her heart grandma rejoiced, and, as she told Aunt Debby, privately, "I can hold up my head again, for thee knows it has gone sadly against my principles to hold them in bondage. No matter if Puck and Posy are the poorer for it; the money will be cleaner, and the curse lifted from the land."

Grandma's ideas on the subject of slavery were pretty well known in the neighborhood, but she was so highly respected that her abolitionism was laid to the fact of her being a Friend. She was obliged to be very prudent in war matters, however; like all Unionists at the South in

those days, she never felt secure. The bolt might fall at any moment; and, for the children's sake, the old lady held her peace, and buried her stanch patriotism and ardent love for the Stars and Stripes within her own bosom. She could remember three wars; it remained for the fourth to fill those aged blue eyes with tears. Such stories as grandma could tell, with all the vivacity and minuteness of detail that carried one back into the very times themselves; told, too, with a simple elegance of language and clearness of thought which fascinated the listener, from older people down to Puck and Posy, who thought grandma's recollections were equal to any fairy tales extant.

Dora, who at first had been rather distant and fine-ladyish in her manner toward Marjorie, thawed after a while, and plunged into the opposite extreme, desiring to be very intimate all at once. But Majorie had the same reserve and dignity which had been her characteristic as a child; and, although she was perfectly kind and cordial in her manner, Dora had an aggravating feeling that she could get no nearer this childlike-looking governess. And it vexed her; she began to be suspicious, where no cause for suspicion existed, and gave Majorie credit for being "very deep and sly," whereas, it was the purity and utter simplicity of the girl which baffled her. And another thing annoyed Dora, although she would not for the world have had it known.

The Frost's nearest neighbors were a family named Peyton, who prided themselves upon being one of the much-vaunted "F. F. V.'s," and were the hottest of hot secessionists. The two sons, Clifford and Harry, were in the Confederate army, and the girls, Belle and Rose, were, if anything, more attached to the cause than their brothers.

Belle and Dora were bosom friends; they had been schoolmates, and during the past six months they had been visiting together at the house of Mr. Peyton's brother, in Richmond. Rose was the younger of the two sisters, and she had taken a violent fancy to the little Northerner whom Fortune had sent down among them, very much to the disgust of her sister and Dora. And unfortunately, Harry Peyton (who happened to be at home, where he had been sent from an hospital, to recover his health) had chosen to express great admiration for the pure, innocent eyes, and unconscious beauty of Marjorie's quiet face; expressed, too, in the high-flown language of a very young man, who could not comprehend that Marjorie's failure to understand his compliments proceeded from her being totally unused to anything of the sort. This had been the drop too much in Dora's cup, for Harry had been her special cavalier ever since she was in pantalettes, and her feelings toward Marjorie rapidly verged upon rancorous spite.

One afternoon as Marjorie sat reading aloud to the children in the nursery, she became aware, by the sounds from the piazza below her, that a carriage full of guests had arrived.

Puck and Posy had been having a mischievous outbreak that morning, and they were condemned to exile in their own room for the entire afternoon. Marjorie had, however, so far mitigated the punishment as to come and read several fairy-tales from Grimm's story-book, and when she heard the hubbub of guests outside the house, quite congratulated herself upon having such occupation. But she was not permitted to remain quiet long, for the door opened, presently, with an impatient jerk.

"Are you up here?" demanded Dora, petulantly, put-

ting her pretty face inside. "I came to ask if you can't come down. Grandma 's asleep, and Aunt Debby 's off somewhere on one of her tramps over the place, and the Peytons are here, and who *do* you think should just drive up, in addition, but Cousin Lemuel Hicks."

"Who is that?" asked Marjorie, laying down her book, and thinking she must call Silvy to make the children presentable.

"O, a prosy old fellow, a cousin of grandma's uncle or somebody equally near, who lives beyond Deepwater Run in the nicest old house — so I've heard; I've never been there and never want to," said Dora, regardless of syntax. "And Belle and Rose never saw him before, and I know they'll giggle, and *I* can't talk to them all, at once, you know, so I thought I'd run up and beg you to come down for half an hour, until grandma wakes up. I carried him off into the next room; you don't mind — do you?"

"Certainly not," said Marjorie, pleasantly. "If you think Posy 's apron is clean enough I will put a fresh blouse on Puck and take them down with me. They might get into mischief if I leave them here alone."

"Why don't you call Silvy to dress them," said Dora, as Marjorie began to smooth Puck's refractory brown curls.

"She is ironing, and I know she wants to get done before tea," said Marjorie, simply.

"You do beat all," said Dora. "If you'd lived among these lazy niggers as long as I have you'd find out that the only way to get anything out of 'em is to keep at 'em all the time. And it 's worse than ever now, since that interesting Proclamation. Hurry, won't you; cousin Lemuel might get tired and march out on the piazza, and I don't want the Peytons to see him — O, dear! They 'll

all stay to tea, and *have* to meet ; " and with a despairing shake of the head, Dora vanished.

" Cousin Lemuel — that 's the old gentleman who bwings us peppermints ; don't you mewember, Posy ? " said Puck, tugging at his shoe-strings.

" Yes," answered Posy, promptly, with a dive that nearly upset the basin in which she was washing her hands. " That was five or six years ago."

" You made a mistook this time," retorted Puck — " five years ! you ain't but five years old, Posy. How could you know 'bout Cousin Lemuel's peppermints 'fore you was born ? "

" Papa told me when I was a baby, me dear," said Posy, with a calm assurance which rather staggered Puck.

" Come, children ; take care of that top step, Posy," and with a rosy face on each side of her Marjorie went down into the little west parlor.

An elderly Friend sat in the large rocking-chair, fanning himself leisurely, and Marjorie had only time to think what an odd, rusty-looking figure he was, before he turned and saw her.

" Who is this ? " said Friend Hicks, in the gruffest of voices, but rising courteously, nevertheless, on Marjorie's entrance. " One of thy visitors, Puck ? "

" It 's our governess," cried both children, in a breath.

" I am Daisy Russell," said Marjorie, introducing herself in the simple Quaker fashion. " Mrs. Frost is asleep, and the children and I came down to keep you company until Miss Debby comes in from a visit to a poor woman. I am expecting her every moment."

" Is there any more of thee ? " asked the old gentleman, abruptly, his grim face softening as he glanced at the sweet one before him.

"Sir?" said Marjorie, opening her eyes a little, and wondering if she could have left a piece of herself outside on the door-mat.

"Have you got any brothers and sisters? — that 's what Cousin Lemuel means," interposed Puck, seeing her face of bewilderment.

"O!" and, try as she might, a smile of quiet fun danced around Marjorie's lips. "I beg your pardon — no; I am an orphan."

"Thee looks very young to be a teacher, very," said Friend Hicks.

"I am young," said Marjorie, gently. "But I have to earn my own living, you know. Mrs. Moulton (the lady in Philadelphia who educated me) was a very faithful teacher, and she thought I was competent to teach children as young as these."

"Louisa Moulton, eh? Then thee knows *something*, which is more than I can say for most girls in these days. An orphan? well," nodding abruptly, "the Lord takes care of those who try to help themselves, thee'll find. And how is Louisa Moulton in these perilous times?"

Posy, who considered that she had been left out of the conversation quite long enough, stuck her arch face over Friend Hicks' shoulder, having climbed on the back of his chair for that purpose. "I s'pose you haven't got any peppermints for little girls?" said she, in an indescribably insinuating voice.

"Posy! You're vewy impolite," said Puck, in virtuous indignation, but edging nearer the pocket from whence the peppermints might be expected.

"Heyday! so thee remembers the last time," said Friend Hicks, wheeling around toward the little pleader with a twinkle in his eye, notwithstanding his gruff tones.

"No, it was me," cried Puck, as the great hand was pulled out of the pocket and disclosed a paper full of tempting red and white peppermints.

"Thee said thy little sister was very impolite to ask," said Friend Hicks, holding the candy suspended over the heads of the round-eyed pair.

"Well," said Puck, with the utmost deliberation, and drawing his R's to twice their usual length, "I weckon I'm — impolite too!"

Friend Hicks indulged in the dry chuckle which seemed to be his nearest approach to a laugh at this naïve admission, and Puck and Posy retired into a corner to discuss the peppermints as Aunt Debby and grandma came in the side door.

Grandma seemed very glad to see the old gentleman, and the pair seated themselves, grandma in her straight-backed chair, and Friend Hicks opposite her, and began a cautious conversation upon the perilous times and the war which seemed to come nearer them every day. Aunt Debby improved the opportunity to give minute directions as to the arrangement of Friend Hicks' room to Marjorie, who offered to oversee Silvy's handiwork and get out the clean linen. It was proof of Aunt Debby's liking for Marjorie that she handed out the keys of the linen closet; a mysterious sanctum which Dora had never yet been permitted to set her foot inside of; but Marjorie had shown herself willing and ready to be of service in many ways since her arrival, and now she slipped quietly away to execute Aunt Debby's orders and see that the guest was made comfortable.

When she came down again, half an hour later, she found the family going out to tea, and Rose Peyton laid hold upon her immediately.

"Where have you been hiding, you Northern lily," said Rose, who was a bundle of small affectations, and had chosen this poetical style of addressing Marjorie. "Dora said you were entertaining that curious old bear," a backward glance at Friend Hicks, "and I had half a mind to run away from the others and help you."

"Thank you," said Marjorie. "But he is not a bear at all; I liked him." Which remark caused Rose to regard her with a puzzled stare; any man over five-and-twenty was a fossilized specimen, to Rose.

Marjorie found Harry Peyton at her elbow as they seated themselves at the tea-table, and he cleverly slipped into Puck's seat on her left hand, that young gentleman having attached himself closely to Friend Hicks. The children usually sat one on either side of their governess, and Posy's apron was so stiff, and the strings starched so much, that several of Harry's complimentary speeches passed unheeded while Marjorie was attending to her little charge.

"I think you might give me half an ear, Miss Daisy," said he, in a low voice. "All I can see is the back of your neck. I'm going off before long, and you might be a little kind."

"I beg your pardon; what did you say?" said Marjorie, turning a face of such entire simplicity toward Harry, that, for a moment, it completely confused him.

"I said I was going away," said he, recovering himself.

"You don't expect me to say I'm sorry?" said she, smiling. "My sympathies are all on the other side, you know."

"We've had quite a skirmish in the Valley, lately," Cliff Peyton was saying on the other side of the table. "An hundred or so killed, and as many more wounded. The Yankees got the worst of it though, and fell back."

"Were they outnumbered?" asked Marjorie. She knew it was not prudent, but she could not help it.

"Like as not," said he, carelessly, thinking that if the little governess had not been so pretty he would be angry.

"Why don't you say 'of course,'" said Aunt Debby, emphatically. "O, I forgot. Five Yankees to one Confederate is about the right allowance, isn't it?"

"Just about," said Harry, interposing, good-naturedly. "Don't be so caustic, Miss Debby. You're the only Yankee I ever saw who could make corn-bread like this."

"Lucky I've got *something* to make me endurable," retorted she. "Daisy, you're eating nothing. Take care that Posy doesn't make herself ill with marmalade."

But the conversation had gotten a warlike aspect now, and only respect for Mrs. Frost kept the young men within bounds. As it was, Marjorie sat listening, her eyes on her plate, her cheeks tingling, and a curious lump in her throat, longing to combat them, and feeling as if she had never realized how dear the old Flag was before. It was her first experience in hearing Confederates talk, and happening to look up she caught a look from under Friend Hicks' bushy eyebrows which betrayed that, however calm his exterior, inwardly the Quaker was carnally-minded and "moved to anger."

For the rest of the evening Marjorie avoided the Peytons as much as she was able to without being pointed, and sat in the west parlor talking to the older people. Friend Hicks seemed to have taken a fancy to her, so she sat down by the old gentleman and told him all the details in relation to Mrs. Moulton which she thought would interest or amuse him.

The Peytons went away, at last, Rose promising to come over in a few days and take Marjorie and Dora out

on horseback. And then Marjorie went up-stairs to bed.

Passing along the hall a few minutes later on her way to ask Aunt Debby a question, she was startled by seeing Friend Hicks' door open softly, and his head slowly emerge from the aperture.

"Is that thee, Debby?"

"No, sir; it 's Daisy. Can I do anything for you?" said she, wondering what could be the matter as she had arranged his room with the greatest care.

"O yes, thee will do. Ahem!" clearing his throat carefully. "Could thee get me a night-cap? I have forgotten mine, and I shall surely take cold if I sleep without it."

"A night-cap?" said Marjorie, biting her lips to restrain a smile. "I'll ask Miss Debby."

"Do; I'll be infinitely obliged to thee," said Friend Hicks, in a relieved voice, bobbing his head inside his door again as Marjorie went to find Miss Debby.

"My stars!" ejaculated that lady, raising both her hands in dismay at the request, as Marjorie explained her guest's dilemma. "Haven't got such a thing to my name. What ever *shall* I do? He'll get cold, and, like enough, be sick for a week on our hands — not but what I'd be willing to take care of him; and good care too," added Aunt Debby, repenting her inhospitality. "What are you laughing at, Daisy?" catching sight of Marjorie's dancing eyes: "how would one of Aunt Frost's do, I wonder?"

"I don't believe he'd wear it," said Marjorie, breaking into a laugh; "but I'll take it to him and try, if you will give me one."

So Aunt Debby went into grandma's room, and pres-

ently emerged therefrom with a night-cap of immaculate whiteness, bordered by a frill of ancient pattern, being very wide and very full. Marjorie had her doubts as to its probable acceptance, but she took it, and going to Friend Hicks' door tapped softly.

"Did thee find one?" said the gruff voice, anxiously, as he opened the door.

"Only this, sir," said Marjorie, respectfully, hoping that Dora would not come down the hall. "It 's one of Mrs. Frost's, and I'm afraid you won't want to wear it."

"Just the thing," announced the old gentleman, clapping it on his head, and pulling the strings under his chin complacently. "A trifle short on the forehead, maybe, but I'll pinch these furbelows down," and he gave the night-cap a pull which made the frill bulge out on the left side in a very tipsy manner, and gave a rakish look to his grim face that was indescribable.

"Is that all, or can I do anything more for you?" asked Marjorie, thinking that she had never seen such an irresistibly comical figure, and controlling her smiles with the utmost difficulty.

"I'm obliged to thee, no. Good-night," and she went down the hall, her face dimpling with amusement.

"Friend," a queer whisper reached her ears just as she touched the knob of her door, and turning back she saw the night-cap bobbing up and down mysteriously, "if it wouldn't be too much trouble, would thee tie these tapes? My fingers are all thumbs; I am not accustomed to these caps, thee knows."

Marjorie tied the night-cap, and again bidding good-night she got safely into her own room where her merriment exhaled in a long laugh.

Fortunately for Aunt Debby, Friend Hicks did not

catch cold, and the next day, greatly to Dora's relief, the old gentleman returned home, evidently much pleased with his visit. He invited Marjorie to come and see him, and bring Puck and Posy, and Marjorie promised that she would go some Saturday and stay until Monday with Aunt Debby and the children.

She little thought under what circumstances she would meet the grim old Quaker again.

Puck had been a model of good behavior for some days. He had arrived at words of three syllables, and having conquered half a page of them one morning, he implored permission to accompany Cato on an expedition to cut pine-knots in a remote part of the plantation. Posy was terribly discomfited at not being allowed to accompany the party, but it was too far for her; so she watched Cato, Puck, and Blot as long as the cart was in sight, and was but partially consoled by one of the most exciting fairy tales in Grimm's collection.

Uncle Cato was a genuine specimen of the Southern negro, although his grizzled hair was white, in some places; and he was much more neat in his personal attire than most of his class. This was owing to Mrs. Frost's unwearied efforts; the old lady was so scrupulously neat herself, that it made her positively unhappy to have a slovenly house-servant. Her ideas had taken root with Cato, who waited at table with a style and manner that was very impressive, always standing at "ole missis'" chair, and leaving his son Joe to wait upon Miss Debby. Cato rarely went out to do any work, but the last pine-knots that had been brought home by Jim, the coachman, were "a very poor lot," as Cato said, so this morning he was determined to see what he could get for himself. Puck thought it was great fun to go with Uncle Cato,

and he tumbled around in the bottom of the cart, playing with Blot, and vainly endeavoring to stand on his head, a proceeding that was attended with great detriment to his hat and his clothes.

"Dis yer 's de place, I reckon," said Cato, standing up in the cart at last, and peering out into the grove of pines. "Jump down, Massa Puck; I'll take care ob de hatchet."

Puck obeyed, bursting two buttons off his knickerbockers in the descent, and turning a complete somersault over Blot, which brought him up in a state of bewilderment (Puck, not the dog), and set him wondering why he never could accomplish that magnificent feat when he wanted to astonish Posy.

Cato found the tree upon which Jim had begun to experiment, and hacked away at it to his heart's content, laying in a goodly array of knots. It was great fun to watch him at first, but after a while Puck grew tired; he was such a piece of perpetual motion that he never was contented with anything long. Blot's antics were the only play that he never wearied of, and to these he now devoted himself. He made the dog perform all his little tricks, — fetch and carry, beg, bark, and growl, and then he began to run races with him. Each race carried the pair a little further from Cato, until at last they were quite a quarter of a mile away, and, being tired out, the playmates sat down to rest.

"Tired, Blot?" said Puck, panting and puffing himself.

Blot thumped his tail affirmatively, then pricked up his ears, glared with droll fierceness into the underbrush, and gave a low growl.

"What is you looking at?" demanded Puck. "Don't s'pose there 's any snakes wound here. Wish I had a tame snake; wouldn't I fwighten Posy."

Blot gave another sniff, jumped up suddenly, and then began to bark.

"There ain't anybody round 'cept Cato," said Puck, who held regular conversations with Blot, and firmly believed that the dog understood all he said. "'Tain't a musk-wat — 'cause there ain't nothin' but bushes. Blot, you must learn to walk on your hind legs, like that dog Miss Daisy tells about that b'longed to the soldier in Philadelphia. Wonder how you'd look dressed up like a soldier? I'll get Miss Daisy to make you a blue coat an' jacket — le' me see," meditatively: "I don't know what kind of jackets Union soldiers wear. I've never seen any but gway ones like Harry Peyton's."

Blot, whom he had been holding by his fore paws during this soliloquy, now made a frantic struggle to get away, and a voice just over Puck's head said, faintly, but with a mirthful sound in it, —

"Shut your eyes tight for a minute; then open them, and I'll show you a blue jacket."

Puck gave a bounce off his stone and looked behind him. An arm was parting the thicket, and above it was a pale face and long brown mustache surmounted by a dirty bandage which partially covered a crop of chestnut curls. Blot, like the sensible dog he was, had ceased barking the instant the stranger spoke, and in another moment a tall young man in a blue uniform sat down by Puck's side.

"Where did you come from?" gasped Puck, with round-eyed amazement.

"Out of the swamp," said the stranger. "I'm very hungry and thirsty; can you tell me if there is a spring anywhere about here?"

"Nothin' neawer than the fwog pond," said Puck

gravely. "An' that 's dwied up. I guess" — very cautiously, and edging off a little as if afraid of the consequences of his remark — "I guess you're a wunaway soldier, eh?"

"What if I am? what would you do?" asked the stranger, with an amused face.

"Soldiers *never* should wun," said Puck, severely. "That 's what Aunt Debby said. An' Harry Peyton said that only Yankees did — my! wasn't she mad?" and he forgot the rest of his speech in the recollection of Aunt Debby's wrath.

"Where do you live?" said the stranger presently.

"Two or three miles off, over that way," said Puck, pointing over his shoulder to indicate the direction. "If you'll come with me I'll get sumpin' for you to eat; weckon Uncle Cato bwinged some lunch. He mos' always does."

"Who dat talking to li'le massa?" said an anxious voice beside the pair. It was Cato, who had come softly over the grass, looking for his mischievous charge.

"I was asking this little fellow where I could find something to eat and drink," said the soldier. Cato's suspicious face changed as he saw the blue uniform; his hat was in his hand and he was bowing with great deference.

"Massa is one of de Lincum sogers, eh? Where did you come from, massa? Dis yer 's a bery bad neighborhood; eberybody secesh 'bout hyar."

"I came from a swamp over in that direction, where I spent last night," said the soldier, pointing across the hedge.

"Laws! Dat de bery wosse place ob de lot, sar; dat 's Cunel Richards', where dey keep de hounds, black debils

fur huntin' de pore nigga and de 'scaped prisoners. Massa ain't one ob dem, for sure?"

"I won't say much about myself, my friend, for fear you might be questioned," said the soldier; "I know you darkies are to be trusted; the day before yesterday a negro gave me my breakfast. I was wounded in the head as you see," touching his bandage, "and it wants doctoring."

"An' here I am, like an old fool, talkin', while massa is getting hungrier," said Cato, recollecting the stranger's first request. "Le' me help you 'long sar; if you'll take dis chile's arm and kinder hobble over yonder where de cart is, dere 's some hoe-cake and apple pie dar, an' you 's 'tirely welcome to my share, sar."

Puck ran ahead with Blot in a high state of excitement. What an adventure this would be to tell Posy and Miss Daisy. How glad he was that he came after pine-knots this morning, as it had afforded him a sight of a real, live Yankee soldier.

Cato looked carefully around to make sure that there were no intruders, and then helped the soldier into the cart, and sat down to watch. The young man ate as if he was half-famished, but after the first few bites, the food seemed to make him faint and ill, for he leaned back against the side of the cart and motioned for a drink of some currant shrub which Cato had luckily brought along. In turning his head suddenly, the soldier knocked the pole which supported the covering of the cart, and, to Cato's dismay, and Puck's infinite terror, the wound on his head began to bleed violently.

"My gwacious, Cato, he'll be dead wight off," cried Puck, frightened almost to death at the sight of the blood trickling down the young man's ghastly face.

"You jes' hold on dat ar mighty tight," said Cato, forgetting his customary respect, and seizing hold of the dirty bandage. "We'll haf 'em in a minute, massa. Hi! never saw nuffin bleed like dat ar; better be spry, for sure."

He pulled out his red bandana handkerchief as he spoke, and tried to stanch the blood with it; but in a few seconds it burst out again, and Cato was in dismay as he saw by the pallid lips and difficult breathing of his patient that he must have assistance.

"Dis never do," cried he. "Miss Debby, she know, for sure, what to do. I'll haf to take you to our house, massa, or if dat ain't safe, to dis nigga's cabin and let ole Cl'rinda tend to you. Massa Puck, your li'le hands mus' do de driving; Cato'll haf to see to dis ar hisself."

Puck was nothing loth to play charioteer, so he climbed out in front and slapped the horse with the reins in a very important manner, while Cato made his patient lean back against him and hold one end of the bandage while he held the other as firmly as possible. But every jolt brought a pang with it, and as they drove around to the back-door of the house (after a long twenty minutes, which seemed like hours to Cato), the soldier turned even more ghastly white than before, and lay senseless in the negro's arms.

Marjorie happened to be in the kitchen with Aunt Debby, engaged in "doing over" some jelly, and she had just gone out to the door to bring in some jelly-pots which Chloe had set in the sun to dry, when the cart drove up.

"What is the matter? Why, Cato, who in the world have you got there?" said she, almost dropping the jelly-pots in her surprise at the appearance of the blood-stained stranger.

"Dunno, missy; spects it 's one of Massa Lincum's sogers, de Lord's own people for setting de slaves free. Where 's Miss Debby? — he 's very bad" —

"My stars! Here, Jim!" ejaculated Aunt Debby, flying out of the kitchen, and upsetting three pots of jelly in her hasty exit. "Jump right into the cart, and help Cato lift that young man out. Bring him straight up — where 's Dora?" with sudden anxiety, as she saw the blue uniform.

"Gone to see Missy Belle, an' won't be home till tea," chimed in Silvy, at her elbow, her eyes starting half out of their sockets at the apparition carried past her in Jim's and Cato's arms.

"Thank goodness!" in a relieved tone. "Take him right up into the little room off mine, quick. Silvy, take Puck, and keep him with Posy in the back kitchen until I send for them. Daisy, run up into grandma's closet, and get down that blue box on the second shelf — it 's full of lint and bandages — and bring it to me."

As she gave these rapid orders, Aunt Debby was filling a basin with water, and now catching up a sponge which lay on the kitchen table, and unfastening her scissors from her belt where she always carried them, she whisked down the hall and up the front staircase behind her patient, as fast as her feet could carry her, while Marjorie went swiftly up to find the lint and bandages.

CHAPTER XIX.

CATO'S GUEST.

"ARE you fit for this work, child?" said Aunt Debby, raising her head and eyeing Marjorie as she stood beside her.

The bleeding was stanched at last, and Aunt Debby was free to think of some one else beside the soldier, who opened his blue eyes as she spoke.

"I think so," said Marjorie, steadily. She had been at Aunt Debby's side every instant, helping in a deft, quiet way that aroused the good lady's admiration.

"You've good stuff in you," said Aunt Debby, abruptly. "He 's coming round. Put a spoonful of that brandy to his lips."

"Thank you," said the faint voice, as Marjorie followed the direction she had received, and the blue eyes glanced curiously from Aunt Debby's angular, spare face, to the child-like one which bent over his pillow.

"You mustn't talk much, though I'm free to confess that I'd like to ask you a few questions. I see yours in your eyes: you want to know where you are. Well, we're good Union people in this house; make your mind easy. The blacks are faithful, most of 'em old servants. It 's no ways likely that you'll be set upon by the secessionists, for we're a family of Friends, and are principled against fighting. And you'll have to make up your mind to stay here till that head gets better. If it 's not impertinent, I'd like to know your name; I am Deborah Frost."

A mirthful, twinkling smile crept into the soldier's eyes as Aunt Debby's crisp sentences came forth in her odd, quick way.

"My name is — you may call me Captain Rex," said he. "Not that I do not trust you," added he, hastily, seeing the gleam of incredulity in Miss Debby's eye, "but I am so fearful of getting any one into trouble. And that is truly a part of my name, — you'll forgive me for not giving the last half of it?"

"Hum!" said Aunt Debby, surveying him. "When I was a girl, 'Rex' meant 'King' in my Latin grammar, and like as not it stands for the same thing now. You're right, young man, and have more sense in that cut head of yours than I have in my gray one — I sha'n't ask you another word about it."

"But I want to tell you," began he, eagerly. Aunt Debby stopped him.

"No, you don't — at any rate, not now. You will eat a little chicken soup which I'm going to send you, and then you must keep perfectly quiet until I come here again. Cato, you stay here until I send Silvy up. That bandage looks as scientific as if Doctor Forsyth himself had put it on," giving it a satisfied pat. "A precious good doctor was spoiled in me. Daisy, in half an hour you come in and give him a teaspoonful more of that brandy," and, gathering up her various belongings, Aunt Debby departed to superintend the chicken broth and tell grandma the story of the wounded soldier who had sought shelter with them.

Marjorie found the children in a state of excitement; Puck, in the act of rehearsing the wounded soldier for Posy by tying his head up in a towel, and daubing his rosy face with soap suds, to represent blood.

Marjorie took possession of the pair of rogues, and reduced their rampant spirits to something like quietude by telling them that they must be very careful what they said about the poor young gentleman.

"For you know," said she, "that there are many wicked people about here who would think it right to bring other soldiers and drag him away to prison, if they knew he was here; and so, children, you must be very particular not to say a word about what has happened."

"I'll pwomise, Miss Daisy," said Puck, "an' then, you know, I can't tell, if I want to, 'cause it is dwefful to bwake a pwomise, Aunt Debby says."

"That would be bearing false witness, me dear, and maybe you'd fall down dead like Ananias and Sapphira," said Posy, deeply impressed. "Would he, Miss Daisy?"

"No, dear, I think not. God punishes people for telling wrong stories in different ways now," said Marjorie, who knew that the only way to talk to these droll little people was to meet them on their own ground. "But I'm glad you understand the value of a promise. I can trust you, Posy?"

"Of course," said the little maid, with much dignity. "I can keep a promise as well as Puck, if I *am* ever so much younger."

"Very well; then you may go down and see if dinner is nearly ready, and don't disturb your grandma."

The soldier lay with his blue eyes half closed as Marjorie entered his room, but they opened at the first sound of her low voice.

"Better, thank you," said he, meeting her sympathizing look with a bright smile. "I am only weak from loss of blood, and hunger. I was wounded in the battle of Opequan Creek, and have been wandering about ever

since, trying to get back on the 'debatable ground,' fearing to fall in with some of Early's men, and spend an indefinite period in a rebel prison."

"But you weren't to talk," said Marjorie, thinking that the lithe, long limbs, and broad chest betokened great strength, and that the merry smile was the sweetest she had ever seen, except one. "Uncle Cato hasn't been doing his duty, I fear."

"Yes, I has, missy," said Cato, affronted. "I'se done all de talking my own sef, dat 's de trufe. 'Spose I'se not goin' to let de young marster know what sort of folks he 's fallen in with, eh? We ain't none of yer pore white trash, but a 'spectable Quaker family, one of de fust in Pennsylvany."

"Then continue to do all the talking," said Marjorie, with such a winning glance that Cato was mollified. "Is there anything more that I can do for you?"

The soldier thanked her, and begged for the chicken broth, and she went away to ask Aunt Debby about it.

But Captain Rex was restless after that, and Cato found that his stories of the family grandeur did not meet with as strict attention as he desired.

The girl's gentle face haunted Reginald Gray; if he closed his eyes, it danced before him tantalizingly, and when he opened them he saw her still. Whom did she resemble? Where had he seen her before?

But she did not come back that night. The only other visitor whom he had was Aunt Debby, who came in at twilight, and, having made sure that the head was doing nicely, sat down by his side for a chat.

"I've been thinking about you," said she, "and grandma and I have talked the matter over. We can't let you go away at present, but an unknown guest is a

suspicious individual in these times, to some of our neighbors. So I'm going to spirit those clothes of yours away," nodding significantly at the uniform hanging over a chair, "and give you a suit of Reuben's, none the worse for wear, which hangs up-stairs in the clothes-press. It 's not a Friend's dress, so you won't feel awkward in it. And I mean to give out that you're a relation from the North — (Boston won't do ; that 's too abolition) — say from New York. If anybody asks me, I mean ; I sha'n't tell any unnecessary lies."

"I hope you will not be obliged to tell any on my account," said Captain Rex, unable to help smiling.

"Well, you see, I'm not sure but I've got a weak one in the camp," said she. "It 's my niece."

"Not that young girl whom you called Daisy?" said Captain Rex, with a startled face.

"Bless you, no! She 's one of the right sort. My niece Dora was fortunately out of the house when you came into it, and, as luck will have it, only got back five minutes ago. I'm thankful that she didn't bring that hot-headed Harry Peyton with her. The fat would have been in the fire, then. I am afraid to trust her. She 's had her silly head turned by a parcel of Confederate officers whom she met down in Richmond, and she'd be bitter enough against the Union, only she don't quite dare to before her grandma and me. And you'd best be careful when she 's round — that 's all!"

"But, my dear lady, with all thanks for your kindness, I think there is too much danger attending my stay — danger to you, I mean. If I can rest for a day more I think I should be able to go on ; it cannot be many miles to Winchester, unless I have wandered very far out of the way."

"It 's twenty odd miles by the road," said Aunt Debby,

resolutely, "and you ain't any more fit for such a tramp than a six-months-old baby. Don't you fret about the danger; I'll look out for that, and if I see any signs of a muss I'll promise to send you off. I have a friend beyond Deepwater Run where you can go, in case of emergencies. Good-night; Cato will sleep on the sofa, and my room is the other side of that door. Mind you're careful about Dora — you may talk to Daisy and welcome."

"Is she another niece?" asked Captain Rex, detaining her.

"She 's the children's governess, and no relation," said Aunt Debby, curtly, as she closed the door.

Dora was sitting before her glass, taking down her hair, as Aunt Debby entered.

"What 's all this that Silvy says about some strange young man, who came here to-day?" said she, before Aunt Debby had time to open her lips.

"O, she told you, did she?" said Aunt Debby, feeling that it would be a relief to shake Silvy for her indiscretion. "Yes. A friend of ours, from New York. Somehow, he got hurt in the head and he 's laid up for the present.

"What 's his name?" said Dora; "seems to me it 's a mighty queer time for civilians to be coming down here."

"Mr. King," said Aunt Debby, feeling thankful that she could give a reply which she believed to be the truth.

"O, one of those Kings that grandma is forever talking of," said Dora. "I didn't know but it might be a spy of some sort. Harry Peyton was telling me that he received notification to-day of the escape of a very dangerous one, and that a troop of mounted horse were scouring the country for the man."

"He can just keep his mounted horse away from this

house," said Aunt Debby, feeling quite absolved for the untruths she had been guilty of, at this unwelcome intelligence. "Now, Dora, do be up to breakfast to-morrow, for I shall have my hands full, and you do hinder so, coming down late, and keeping the table standing."

Dora laughed; and Aunt Debby went off to consult Marjorie, and was relieved to learn from her that the children had been tutored. For the little people had been so carefully trained that she knew their promise was sacred; and feeling secretly uneasy about Dora, and resolving to keep her guest out of Harry Peyton's way, Aunt Debby retired, after kissing Marjorie good night.

For two days Captain Rex kept his room by Aunt Debby's advice, but on the third morning, as Dora came languidly into the west parlor where grandma sat, she saw a tall figure lounging in the corner, with Puck and Posy at either elbow.

"My grand-daughter, Dora, Friend King," said Grandma Frost, placidly. The gentleman rose, and despite his disfiguring bandage, Dora exclaimed to herself, "O! what a handsome man," as he bowed pleasantly.

Reginald Gray was as mischievous as our old friend Regie had been, and he was secretly much amused with the airs and graces which Dora proceeded to play off on him. He wished that the little governess would make her appearance; he had not seen her since that night when he came.

Puck had shown off all Blot's tricks to his new friend, and Posy, not to be behind in attention, had conducted her family of dolls down-stairs, and was performing the several introductions, which Captain Rex received with the utmost gravity.

"This is Lily Rose," said Posy, displaying a doll with

an unfortunate fracture in its left cheek; "and this one is called Rose Violet."

Captain Rex admired the young lady, and inquired what accident had disfigured poor Lily Rose.

"I jumped off the bureau one day and fell wight on her head," explained Puck. "Posy cwied, more 'an Lily Wose did, and I saved up all my money and branged her another from the store at Deepwater Wun."

"Yes; wasn't he a good brother?" said Posy. "This is the one."

"Belvidewa," said Puck.

"It 's not," said Posy, forgetting her customary politeness, and flatly contradicting him. "Her name 's Seraphina, 'cause you went and baptized her 'Elijah the Tishbite,' and Miss Daisy said she could have a nickname, and she called her Seraphina, after a doll she had 'long time ago when she was a little girl—so now, me dear. Didn't you, Miss Daisy?"

Marjorie was entering the room with a plate of some delicious compound (the secret of which was only known to Aunt Debby) for their guest, and the light from the open window fell full upon her sweet face. Swift as lightning, Reginald Gray's thoughts flew back to just such a pair of pathetic, child's eyes; Posy's last speech had struck the chord he had been vainly seeking for in his memory, and the color rushed into his pale cheeks as he said to himself, "Her very image! can it be my little Madge?"

"Did I what?" said Marjorie, as Posy caught hold of her hand. "Take care, you'll upset me."

"Didn't you say my doll should be Seraphina, and didn't you have one of your own named so, when you were a little girl?"

"Yes," said Marjorie, the sober shade coming over her

face which always stole there when her childhood was mentioned.

"Posy is fond of high-sounding names," said Dora, as Marjorie set down her plate before Captain Rex.

"Miss Daisy seems to have been, also," said he, looking keenly at her as she stood beside him.

"Seraphina was the only doll I ever had that I can remember," said she, modestly.

"When you were very little?" said he, with a persistency that made Dora wonder.

"I don't know. I beg your pardon," becoming rosy red, and feeling strangely embarrassed under the steady gaze of his blue eyes; "I think I must have been very ill when I was a child, for I can remember so little of myself at that time — the time when I had Seraphina."

"I suppose you had to depend on the recollection of older people," said he, his heart beating faster, as every word she uttered seemed to bring his little playmate before him.

"I had not even that — I am an orphan," she said, with a gentle dignity that closed the subject for the present.

But he watched her, as she sat at her sewing in the window, a little out of the circle, but taking part in the conversation whenever she was appealed to, with a modest ease that was very charming contrasted with Dora's airs. It was the same face he said to himself; he knew now why his imperfect glimpses of it had haunted him. She did not remember him — how could that be accounted for — he wished that there was a piano here to try the effect of playing the Prayer she had been so fond of. Perhaps she would recollect him when he got this bandage off; he tugged at it impatiently as the thought crossed his mind,

and then called himself a fool for building such a magnificent air-castle from what might be only a marvelously strong chance-resemblance.

"Li'le Missy Daisy, Chloe says will you please look at dem fritters," said Cato, coming in waiter in hand, and evidently being about to lay the cloth for dinner.

"Fritters?" said Aunt Debby, looking up. "What is Chloe thinking about. Sit still, Daisy; I'll go."

"Law's, 'tain't for Miss Debby," said Cato, doggedly. "It 's sumpin' for li'le missy, for sure, an Chloe won't be no ways obligated for making nobody else go out in de kitchen."

"Nonsense," said Aunt Debby, "I'll go and see."

But Cato did not follow her.

"If li'le missy pleases," said he, with a beseeching glance at Marjorie, "dare 's de yellow china, an 'de pink, and I dunno which looks bestis — would Missy Daisy come and see?"

"What 's got into you, Cato," said Dora, sharply, as Marjorie rose with a smile at the old man's persistency. "Like as not he 's broken something and is afraid to tell grandma."

"See here, missy," said Cato, getting Marjorie safely into the dining-room, and peering carefully around to see that no one overheard him. "You'se 'cuse me for bringin' you way out hyar — I'se done tired waiting for a chance to speak to you."

"What is the matter?" said Marjorie, kindly. Cato drew a step nearer, and said, in a frightened whisper.

"De young master in dere isn't de only Lincum soger in dis yer place, missy. Cato hab one all to hisself, down in his li'le cabin."

"Another?" ejaculated Marjorie.

"Yes, missy. Bery strange man, Cato dunno what to do 'bout him. He come de night before las' an' he hab a fit, or sumpin' dat kind, an' frighten Cato and pore Cl'rinda mos' to deff. Den he gets better, but he awful scared for fear ob de sogers. He talk kinder wild, like, an' says every man's hand is ag'inst him; I tink he 's not quite right in de head. Cl'rinda an' me, we 's done puzzled; dunno what to do wid him, missy, no more dan de dead."

"Can't you get him away, Cato?"

"I'se afeard, missy. De rebels is roun' bery fierce, I hear, an' we 's can't turn de man into de hands ob de Philistines."

"Why don't you ask Miss Debby?" said Marjorie. "She can tell you a great deal better than I what to do."

"I'se comin' to dat, missy. De soger he make Cato swar dat he not tell *nobody* ob his bein' hyar, an' Cato done promised — can't break his word. But las' night, when li'le missy came down to Jim's cabin to see 'bout de sick baby, de soger, he seen missy as she was passing by. He mos' had anuder fit. Says he, 'Who dat girl — where she come from?' — eyes mos' starting out of his head. I tole him dat was Missy Daisy from de Norf, de gubberness to Massa Puck, and li'le Posy, an' he ask all sorts ob questions 'bout you, missy. An' he want to see you."

"To see me?" echoed Marjorie, in great surprise. "What should he want to see me for?"

"Dunno; he mighty funny man, dat's de trufe. He call Cato bery early dis morning, an' he say dat I mus' go and tell li'le missy dat she mus' come an' see 'im. 'Tell her dat I'll make it worth de while,' says he; 'dat I can tell her 'bout her fadder.'"

Marjorie started violently; the blood rushed into her face in a crimson tide.

"*My father*! O, Cato, do you think he spoke the truth? Do you think he knows?"

"How can I tell, missy?" said Cato, astonished at the effect of his message. "He a mighty queer man — de debbil, I tink."

"Was that what he said," continued Marjorie, in great agitation, "that he could tell me about my father?"

"For true, missy, dat 's what he say, two, t'ree times."

"I'll go," said Marjorie, turning to the door.

"Stop, stop, missy; you can't go now. Mus' wait and let Cato take you after tea; mus'n't let de oder niggas know dat Cato hab a man in de cabin to see li'le missy."

"Well, then, Cato, I will wait"—

"An' mus'n't say nuffin to Miss Debby," said Cato, hurriedly, as that lady appeared in the door with a demand whether dinner was not almost ready.

Dora, underneath all her affectation, possessed a good deal of cunning and shrewdness, and she had not been more than half deceived with Aunt Debby's account of the handsome stranger, who had come among them so unexpectedly. Grandma's placid matter-of-course treatment of their guest did much toward laying her suspicions, but every now and then they would crop up again. Captain Rex's military bearing and quick, decided manner was totally different from all the civilians that she had ever seen, and she speedily settled it in her own mind that he had been in the army, whether he was now or not. And unconsciously, he gave her great offense by his apparent interest in Marjorie. Try, as he did, to keep the look of watchfulness out of his eyes whenever they rested on the little governess, he could not wholly banish it; she was in his thoughts most of the time. Dora knew nothing of the problem that he was trying to solve, and very naturally

concluded that he was bewitched with the dove-like eyes and the simplicity which Harry Peyton had also admired. And it made her very angry. Absurd as it may seem, she begrudged the passing admiration; her vanity was so overweening that she was not willing to have a stray crumb fall to Marjorie's share.

Marjorie was strangely restless all that afternoon. Her cheeks glowed with unusual color, and there was a look of wistful expectancy in her face which Captain Rex took note of. He tried to draw her into a conversation, but the effort was futile until Dora left the room. Then, under one pretext or another, he contrived to lessen the shyness under which Marjorie had taken refuge, and without being conscious of it, she was beguiled into talking of her life in Philadelphia. The old charm began to exert itself; Marjorie wondered why the pleasant voice seemed so dreamily familiar and whether she had ever heard one like it before.

"Have you ever been in New York?" he asked, at last, after a pause. The situation of things was too pleasant to be disturbed; so Captain Rex asked the question merely for something to say.

"I have not been in New York for years," she said, with a slight shudder which the recollection of old Moll always gave her. "I never want to go there again."

"Indeed! May I ask you why?" he said, surprised.

She clasped her hands against her breast with the gesture he remembered instantly. "It is no secret. I was a poor little orphan in the streets of New York when Mrs. Randolph found me; she has taken care of me and educated me, until now. I am taking care of myself at present," said Marjorie, with a little prideful air that was pretty to see. "I came down to Virginia as a governess, and Puck and Posy are my first pupils."

"You deserve the greatest credit," said he, warmly, with difficulty restraining himself from proclaiming his identity on the spot, so sure was he that he had found the child whom he had loved, in this young girl.

She had only time to give him a glance of thanks and pleasure when Aunt Debby whisked into the room in manifest trepidation.

"Of all days in the year," said she, in subdued tones, "of all days in the year to come; here 's the whole Peyton crowd coming up the avenue, and there 's enough gold lace around to be a dozen rebel officers. Yes; and as for you, Mr. King, you must have a bad turn and go to bed, for all I see. My stories may impose on Dora, but that cut head of yours is a tell-tale, if there 's any soldiers in the way."

Captain Rex looked at the white faces before him and smiled. "Don't be frightened," said he, calmly; "I am well enough to take to the swamps again at very short notice, but just now there does not seem to be even time enough for that."

"Up the kitchen stairs, Daisy," said Aunt Debby, giving him a shove in that direction. "I'll run up to Dora."

"Dora!" That young lady faced about as Aunt Debby's sharp voice saluted her; "that Peyton crowd are down-stairs and I guess they'll stay to tea — anyway, they've a stranger or two with 'em. Mr. King 's had a bad turn; he won't be down, and there'll be no need of an extra leaf in the table."

"Mr. King — O! He was well enough half an hour ago," said Dora, with a look that meant more than her words. Aunt Debby marched straight up to her and took hold of her slender wrists with iron fingers.

"Dora Lyndon, I see you think you're wonderful

sharp, but mind this; you keep your tongue between your teeth before those friends of yours, and don't prate about what doesn't concern you."

The door slammed behind the irate spinster, but Dora shook one of her smarting wrists after the retreating figure and said under her breath, with vindictive emphasis, "I'll pay you for that, ma'am, and in a way that you'll never find me out, too."

Marjorie came down from escorting Captain Rex to his hiding place with a face rather paler than usual, and found the Peyton party making themselves at home on the piazza. In addition to the Peytons proper (who numbered five), there were two officers wearing the Confederate uniform, and evidently belonging to the cavalry, which was also Harry Peyton's arm of the service. Harry had mounted his uniform again, and was in high spirits, devoting himself more to Marjorie than was at all agreeable to her, and making Dora more angry than ever thereby.

The strange officers were Captain Forsyth and Lieutenant Hayes, and the latter of these had, Marjorie thought, the most repelling countenance she ever had seen, with low brows and gleaming teeth, and cold, snaky-looking eyes, whose pale watery-blue color made her shiver. And her liking for the man by no means increased, when she learned, by the conversation at the tea-table that he was the commander of the mounted troop who were scouring the country for the spy whom she had heard Dora mention a few days before.

"He 's a pretty clever dodger," said the Lieutenant, describing his unsuccessful hunt. "Twice we've come down upon a house just an hour or two after he 's quitted it. He must have some way of getting around the

niggers," — suppressing an oath just in time, as he caught Aunt Debby's eye fixed severely upon him; "but from information received to-day I think I'm safe in saying we can lay our hands on him shortly. He'll swing for it," added he, with a chuckle; "and my men will be ready enough to pull the rope in return for the dance he has led them."

"Who is the unhappy man against whom your men have such a spite?" demanded Aunt Debby.

"His name — or his alias — is Rogers. He has as many disguises as there are days in the week, and we have reason for thinking him a double-dyed traitor."

"Is thee quite sure of all thee says, friend?" said Grandma Frost, mildly. "I would counsel thee to moderation if thee finds the man."

Moderation was so unlikely a virtue, judging by Lieutenant Hayes' ferocious countenance, that Belle and Dora giggled, and even Marjorie's anxious face softened into a smile.

From Cato's furtive glances at the officers Marjorie saw that he was very uneasy, and she began to wonder how she should get away from the company and pay a visit to the prisoner in the cabin. Fortune favored her, and her chance came at last in the shape of Posy's being sleepy. Puck and she, of late, had chosen to be put to bed by Marjorie instead of Silvy, and to-night she was very glad of the excuse which their fancy afforded her to leave the room.

"Come for me in the nursery as soon as it 's safe," she managed to say to Cato, as she went away.

Both the little heads were safely on their respective pillows when there came a cautious tap, and Cato's grizzled head came in at the door.

"All ready, missy; Silvy's comin' up to stay with de chil'en, an' if you'se willin' to go down de back-stairs we can get to de cabin in a jiffy. Better put on a cloak, or sumpin'; don't want nobody to see dat white dress, eh?"

Marjorie agreed in the wisdom of Cato's counsel, and wrapping herself in a plaid shawl of Aunt Debby's which hung in the nursery closet, she followed Cato noiselessly down the stairs.

"Gi' me your hand, missy; I'se afraid you'll stumble," said Cato, and they went around the lower end of the house unobserved. Cato's cabin was not very far away; in former times the negro quarter of the Frost plantation had been well filled, but many of the slaves had been sold at the time of Reuben Frost's death, and a large number of others had run away during the war, and now not more than five of the cabins were occupied.

Into the largest of these Cato guided Marjorie.

"Dat you, daddy?" said a bright-eyed little darky, uncurling himself from the step where he had been asleep.

"What you doin' out hyar, Sam; run 'long to yer mammy an' go to bed. Dis way, missy; Cl'rinda an' me 's bery glad to hab a call from you."

Bowing and scraping, Cato led Marjorie through the passage until Sam's sharp eyes were out of range of their proceedings, and then he turned suddenly aside and gave a low tap on a small door at the left, speedily followed by two others.

"It 's jest me, massa," said he, sticking his head inside, with the utmost caution. "If de shutters is closed I'll light de candle."

"Is there any one with you?" said a suppressed whisper from the farther corner of the room.

"Li'le Missy Daisy, sar," said Cato, as he struck a match and set the lighted candle on the table.

"'GENTLEMAN RODDY!'"

Marjorie looked eagerly toward the place from whence the sound proceeded, and by the dim light she saw a pair of piercing dark eyes, set in a strangely pallid face, surmounted by long, curling masses of perfectly white hair which hung profusely about the man's neck. She gave a step forward; a single, low exclamation escaped her, —

"GENTLEMAN RODDY!"

If the face before her could have become whiter she would have said it grew so then as the man fairly jumped from his chair and approached her.

"Who called me that?"

"I did," said Marjorie, recovering herself after her first fright. "I remember you, although you do not seem to recollect me."

"If missy pleases," said Cato, interrupting them, "I go an' watch outside, with Cl'rinda. An' don't stay too long, li'le missy, 'cause de folks might miss you."

"Where did you ever know me by that name?" said the man, slowly, scanning every line of the face before him.

"Once, when I was a wretched, miserable little child, you doctored me in Randall's Alley; do you remember the child who lived with old Mother Moll?"

"By" — exclaimed Gentleman Roddy, with a string of oaths. "Were *you* that child? If I'd only known it then I'd" — he checked himself. It would hardly do to tell her that he thought he might have made more money out of her then than he could now.

"I want to thank you," she said, gently. "I suppose I might have died if it had not been for you and Nancy, and twice you saved me from a beating."

His face softened a little.

"So you remembered that all these years, child? Well,

it 's not many good deeds I've done in my life — I'm glad if there 's one fit to be remembered. Well! Have you no curiosity to know why I sent for you to-night?"

"You sent me word that you could tell me something of my father," she burst out eagerly. "O, sir, *can* you? It is the one hope of my life to find out where I came from, and who my father was."

He paused a moment; he was calculating how far he might tell her what he knew.

"I'm in danger of my life; at any moment those hounds may descend upon me. These people up at the house are friends (so the old negro says), and are not the kind to betray me. If you'll send me to a safe hiding place, I'll — tell you what I suspect is the truth about you."

"But how can I?" said Marjorie, her lips quivering; "I am a stranger here; I know nothing of the country."

"Tell me what you know of your childhood," said the ruffian, changing his tactics abruptly.

"Hardly anything, before the time when I was ill at old Moll's. I remember my mother, and a ship which tossed about, and a man named Barney, who took care of me, and a gentleman with beautiful, kind eyes, who taught me a funny poem about Santa Claus — O!" cried Marjorie, with pain quivering in every line of her expressive face, "if you know anything about me, I beg and pray you to tell me. Don't be so cruel!"

"You look like your mother; that 's the way I recognized you. A bargain 's a bargain; but before we strike one, just tell me how you came here."

"Mrs. Randolph, a lady in Philadelphia, adopted me, and her father, Mr. Clive, educated me."

Gentleman Roddy gave another exclamation, — "Del.

them, is making a fool of me! I had forgotten all about that night."

Marjorie looked perfectly bewildered, and then, suddenly remembering what Cato had said about his visitor's odd behavior, she turned pale. It would not be pleasant to be shut up in a room with a maniac.

"Didn't you act in some tableaux at Mr. Clive's awhile ago?" said her strange companion. "Well, I was there."

"You?"

"Yes. You needn't look so incredulous. When I'm dressed up, and have my wig on, I look like a gentleman. Miss — (never mind; one of your Philadelphia girls) was very civil to Mr. Rogers that night."

"Rogers," said Marjorie, suddenly; "are you the man that Lieutenant Hayes is hunting for?"

"What do you know about it?" demanded he, seizing her by the wrist, fiercely.

"Nothing — let go my hand." The door opened.

"Mos' ready, li'le missy?" said Cato's whisper.

"In a moment," said Gentleman Roddy. Then turning to Marjorie, hurriedly, — "The case lies in a nutshell. You can, if you like, go up to the house and expose me to that officer you talk about. But if you do, I'll not only die hard, but I swear I'll die holding my tongue. On the other hand, if you'll undertake to have me concealed for three days somewhere, at the end of that time the pursuit will be over, and I am safe. If you'll do this, I promise to give you intelligence of the man that I think is your father. Mind," with a tardy sort of justice, as he looked at the delicate girl with whom he was driving such a hard bargain, "I don't say positively he *is* your father, for I can't give the missing links for

several years; but I think that I probably know your parentage. I swear you are the living image of a lady that I suppose was your mother."

Marjorie wrung her hands. What *could* she do? "I cannot do it alone," she whispered, at last. "If I can tell Miss Frost, she may think of a plan. Early to-morrow I will be here. Yes, Cato," and casting a glance of pity at the spy, she joined Cato, and went swiftly back to the house. In her own room, kneeling by the window, her wet cheek pressed against the pane, Aunt Debby found the poor child, half an hour later.

"Bless my soul! what 's all this about?" said the energetic spinster, as the light from the candle in her hand revealed the tear-stained face. "Those precious folks are going, and I came up to make sure that our guest was all right. Who 's been plaguing you?"

"O, Miss Debby," said Marjorie, with a great sigh. "I am in *such* trouble. Tell me what to do."

Aunt Debby sat bolt upright, candle in hand, and listened to the story of Cato's visitor with a countenance expressive of many things. Marjorie poured it all out; her longing and belief that she would eventually find her father, and the curious hiatus in her memory, which made her story sound so strangely improbable.

"It 's a wonder to me why some people are permitted to live," said Aunt Debby, indignantly. "That man Rogers ought to be drowned in the frog-pond for his rascality. And yet, I don't see but he 's got the best of it. Let me see" — then bringing both feet together with an energetic stamp — "that 's it! I've thought of a plan. The miserable creature shall go right down to Cousin Lemuel Hicks'; it 's the safest place anywhere about for hiding. Many a nigger has got help from him before now. You needn't cry one bit more, Daisy; I'll fix it."

"How?" said Marjorie, drawing freer breath, and feeling as if Aunt Debby was a full fledged angel, with angular cheek bones.

"We'll have to go along, for all I can see, to prevent suspicion — you and I and Posy. I'll dress the man up in a Quaker suit of drab, and we'll take Jim and the two-seated cart, and go down to Cousin Lemuel's for two days."

"What will be done with Captain" —

"H-ush! Better be careful; the walls have ears! I'll leave him in Cato's care. I don't see how he can come to grief as long as we've tided him over to-night's inroad; I declare, my heart went up into my mouth, when I heard that scamp talking about hanging, at the tea-table. We'll have to start the very first thing in the morning, Daisy; it 's thirteen miles to Cousin Lemuel's, and up-hill. Hope we don't run foul of any guerrillas on the way. But I must be off and get those Quaker clothes; ten chances to one they won't fit. Then I *should* give up."

The door closed after her, but she was back before it had hardly shut.

"Do you mind just tapping at that young fellow's door, and seeing how he is? And you might tell him that we are off by six o'clock in the morning — too early for him to be stirring. There 's a bowl of egg-nogg on my table that will spoil if some one don't drink it; take that, too."

Marjorie dried her eyes, and put a little cologne on her face to efface the traces of tears; then went softly up the corridor, through Miss Debby's room, to Captain Rex's door.

"A friend," said she, softly, as she tapped. The bolt was drawn in a moment.

"It 's totally dark in here," said he, smiling at her, as she stood on the threshold. "Am I at liberty to come out, or must I continue to play the sick man?"

"Take care; they have not gone yet," said she, handing him the egg-nogg. "Miss Debby said that some one must drink this up!"

"All of it?" said he, eying the bowl comically.

"If you please. We are going away to-morrow on a secret journey, — Miss Debby, Posy, and I, — and shall not be back for twenty-four hours. Cato will take care of you. There is another unlucky prisoner on the place beside yourself, and we propose to spirit him away."

"Can't I go, too?" said he, eagerly.

She shook her head. "I'm afraid not. You are in no danger here, I hope. Good-by; wish us a speedy journey."

"I shall wish you a speedy return instead," said Rex, taking the slender little hand in his, and remembering with an odd sensation how often he used to hold one but a trifle smaller, belonging to a certain gray-eyed child. "Miss Daisy, I have something to tell you when you come back. May I?"

The innocently surprised look she gave him! "Why, yes — of course, I shall be glad to hear it," she said, smiling up at him. "Please don't let Puck bore you outrageously while I am gone."

"Good-night!" And Captain Rex bolted himself in again, with a head full of insane plans, which speedily became still more impracticable when converted into dreams.

Perhaps Aunt Debby would not have congratulated herself so much on her management of Dora, could she have heard a whispered conversation which that young

lady was carrying on with Harry Peyton, on the steps of the piazza, at the same time that her respected relative was on her knees in front of a chest, dragging out clothes.

"Harry," said Dora, slipping her hand into his arm, "somehow, I don't think our negro quarters are above reproach — in war-times, I mean."

"You don't think they have any Federals hidden away?" said Harry, rather startled; for Grandma Frost had so far been unmolested, chiefly owing to the Peyton influence.

"I can't say. Cato and Jim have acted very queerly for a day or so," said Dora, her heart throbbing guiltily at her treachery. "But I only thought — that if Lieutenant Hayes' hunt was unsuccessful, he might look here. If he did it carefully, grandma wouldn't" —

The lie actually stuck in Dora's throat, and she was glad that Captain Forsyth's presence at her elbow prevented anything further. She had said enough, however, and half an hour after, in the solitude of her own room, her momentary fit of revenge past, the unhappy girl would have given much to forget the act of which she had been guilty.

CHAPTER XX.

THE THREAD WHICH JUDGE GRAY HELD.

"ARE you very much occupied, James? The gentleman says his business is urgent," and Miss Rachel handed a card to Judge Gray, as he arose from his chair.

She was the same Miss Rachel, and hardly looked a day older than when she waved her good-by to Marjorie from the door-step. The Judge's hair was touched with silver, now; the soft curls on his temples were almost white, but they only added to the beauty of his noble head and brow, and his hazel eyes wore the old, merry twinkle which haunted Marjorie, still.

"Mr. Percy Clive," said he, looking at the card in his hand. "Of course, Rachel. Ask him to walk in."

"I am very glad to see you, sir," said Judge Gray heartily, shaking hands with his guest as he entered the study. "I was just about writing to your brother;" he glanced at the several sheets upon his desk, "and found it a more voluminous epistle than I had anticipated."

"So he has written you?" said Percy Clive. "Then it will hardly be necessary for me to explain my errand. And now, sir, what information can you give me of a child whom I almost begin to believe must be my little niece."

"Marjorie did reside for a time in my family," said Judge Gray, "but for the last six or seven years, I have lost all trace of her, to my infinite regret." And then in succinct terms he gave Mr. Clive the outline of Marjorie's history, her residence at the Asylum, and her adoption by

Mrs. Wylder, together with her mysterious disappearance. "I have here," said Judge Gray, unlocking a drawer of his secretary, "the letters which Barney Brian gave me, and here is the note which I received from Barry & Williams in answer to a letter of mine asking for information in regard to the parties mentioned in these."

Percy Clive gave a surprised exclamation. "That is my brother's handwriting, beyond a doubt," said he, taking up the letter which began "My dear Father," "and his wife's name was Madeline Hervé, a French girl, from Marseilles. He met her there on his return from a trip to China, and, from all I can learn, her family were as much opposed to the marriage as we were, although we knew nothing of it until after it was done; it was a runaway match.

"George was my father's favorite son, and his rage was fearful when he learned of the marriage. I do not know what Father wrote to my brother, but, judging from that letter (which is evidently a copy of one sent to my father), it must have been something too hard for George to agree to. Poor fellow, he suffered terribly while in England. His efforts to support his wife and child were unavailing, and he came to New York to make a last appeal to Father, leaving them in London. Upon his arrival here he was taken dangerously ill at my house, and I supplied Rodman (then in our employ) with money to forward to Mrs. Clive. She, we now conclude, hearing nothing from her husband, took passage for this country under an assumed name, and George has never been able to trace her until now."

"Rodman seems to be the person to lay hold of," said Judge Gray. "Have you lost all trace of him?"

"Entirely. He had a drunken bout just at that time,

and it now seems to me that he took his dismissal very quietly."

"He had possessed himself of the funds intended for Mrs. Clive, probably," said Judge Gray.

"By George! That never struck me before," cried Percy Clive. "Of course he did, the scoundrel! What shall we do? Advertise for him?"

"Certainly, and for any information of him."

"It seems sad," said Percy Clive, meditatively, "that we should find the child only to lose her: I suppose you have given up all idea of ever finding her now?"

"I had," said Judge Gray, with a curious twinkle of his eyes, "until yesterday."

"Yesterday!" echoed Mr. Clive, starting out of his chair. "You don't mean, my dear sir, that you have actually gotten hold of a clew to her?"

"It looks very much like it," said the Judge, smiling brightly. "I received a note from Mr. Wylder saying that, in a very strange way, a little intelligence of Marjorie had reached him. He says that the detective to whom he gave the case in charge had called at his office to say that last week a woman, calling herself Nancy O'Flaherty, had been to the station of which he is chief to visit a drunken old woman who was dying there, she having been injured in a street brawl. The detective was in the room during the interview, and said that Nancy's chief object in coming to see the woman seemed to be to get her to confess something in regard to a child that had been kidnapped. The man evidently pricked up his ears at that (Mr. Wylder's large rewards have been kept open ever since the child was lost), and he began to question both women."

"Old Moll," continued Judge Gray, referring to the

letter which he held in his hand, "persisted for some time that she knew nothing about it; but finally, feeling that she had not long to live, she confessed that she had picked the child up in the area of a large brown house in Thirty-Fifth Street between Fifth and Madison Avenues. And that," laying down the letter, "is the precise location of Mr. Wylder's house."

"And where is the child now?" asked Mr. Clive.

"Mr. Wylder cannot inform me. He went with the detective to see the woman called Nancy, and was told by her that the little girl had been taken away from New York by a rich lady and gentleman who had found her in the street. She could not give the name of these people, but said that they left a card with her requesting her to send any information which she might gather from the old hag, to a firm in John Street."

"Pray go on, sir!" cried Mr. Clive, as Judge Gray paused and looked keenly at him.

"And that some time after, she found a string of gold beads hidden in the mattress" —

"By Jove!" This time Percy Clive was fairly on his feet, trembling with excitement. "You — you don't mean it?" cried he. "It 's stranger than the strangest romance I ever read. Firm, sir! the woman brought those gold beads to *me*. The card was left with her by my elder brother, Selden, and the beads belong to a child whom he adopted. And if it 's really the same child — there she 's been under my very hand all these years."

It was Judge Gray's turn to utter an exclamation: "Thank God!" The firm lips trembled, and the kind hazel eyes grew moist. "How delighted Rex will be!" was his next remark, intended more for himself than his hearer. "My son," said he, answering Mr. Clive's inquir-

ing face. "He was very fond of little Marjorie, and has never wholly given up hope of finding her. The child was devoted to him; I believe it nearly broke her heart to go away. She went while Rex was very ill, and he never saw her again."

"Your son is in the army, is he not?" said Mr. Clive. "Was he the Captain Gray whose gallant conduct is mentioned in one of Sheridan's last dispatches?"

"He is, sir," said the Judge, pride in his brave boy written on every line of his speaking face.

"I congratulate you; you may well rejoice in such a son," said the other gentleman, heartily. "But I cannot quite realize this amazing information about my brother's child. It is almost too good to be true. And how can we prove it?"

"It is very singular that I should have asked Mr. Selden Clive for information of this very Rodman," said Judge Gray. "That was just at the time of Marjorie's disappearance. Do you happen to know at what time your brother found her?"

"It was during the October of 185–," said Mr. Clive, after thinking a few moments. "My dear sir, I do not see but that we shall have to add to our very great obligations to you by asking you to take a trip to Philadelphia. A recognition of you would be a strong proof of the identity of this young girl. I have never happened to see her, but I have heard my niece, Mrs. Randolph, talk of her. Could you take a trip on with me (stopping in New York to see your friend Wylder, the woman Naney, and the detective), and pay a visit to my brother? I will not write to George until we can say we have found his child."

"I would go if I had more business than usual on

my hands, which luckily is not the case," said Judge Gray warmly. "I love *all* children, but little Marjorie was peculiarly dear to me. I can be ready to leave to-morrow, and, in the mean time, permit me to send to the hotel for your luggage. Nay, I insist," ringing the bell as he spoke. "And now let me take you into the library and introduce you to my sister. I only wish that Rex was at home; he has Marjorie's little bracelet (the one she wore when she strayed with her mother into Wynn), and I cannot get that until I can communicate with him."

Miss Rachel was very much amazed at the strange story which she heard from her brother, so much amazed that she put salt instead of sugar into the tea she was making, and never discovered her mistake until Judge Gray made a comical face and asked if she meant to poison him.

After supper, she bethought herself of the broché shawl, and taking her keys went up to one of her camphor chests, where she found it, just as she had laid it away six years before. Mr. Clive looked at it with great interest, and listened eagerly to the story of how Marjorie was found in the stage-coach on that bitter December morning, and how she travelled all the way to Saybrooke on Judge Gray's knee, wrapped up in his long cloak.

"There goes an 'extra,'" said Judge Gray, at last, as a shrill cry came through the open window, —

"'Nother battle! Two thousand killed and wounded! Phil Sheridan on the war-path!"

"Here, boy!" Judge Gray's face was a shade paler, as he tossed some pennies to the newsboy; and he came over to the centre-table and opened the extra carefully.

"Battle at Opequan Creek," said he. "Partial returns," running his eye over the list before reading more. "Lieutenant Raymond, killed. Major Bascom, severely wounded. Captain Reginald Gray, *missing!*"

The handsome face grew ghastly white; he laid down the paper with a firm hand.

"Rachel, have my small bag packed instantly. There are just thirty-five minutes to spare before the midnight express leaves for New York. Mr. Clive, you will make yourself quite at home here. I shall go direct to Washington and procure a pass to go into Sheridan's lines; I must find my boy."

"My plans are susceptible of change likewise," said Mr. Clive, his face expressing the sympathy which he did not feel that his short acquaintance would warrant him in offering. "I will go with you as far as my own home, at all events. I can go to Philadelphia the next day; when you find Captain Gray, safe and sound, I shall depend upon seeing you at my brother's."

Miss Rachel had the bag ready in a few moments, and the gentlemen bade her good-by, and hurried away, only stopping at Mrs. Livingston's to tell poor grandma that "her boy" was reported missing. Judge Gray spoke as cheerfully as he could, but grandma's heart went down, down, with a thud as if it would never come up again into its place, and when Meta came in, an hour later, very pale and sorrowful, over the news, she found grandma had all but buried Regie, and had much ado to prevent her from sending a mourning order to the dress-maker, by way of being "prepared."

Perhaps some of the eyes who are reading Marjorie's story may have known, from all too sad experience, what such a journey was to Judge Gray as the one he took

then. Travelling day and night, getting the papers and "extras" at every stage, with a heart sinking bitterly one instant, and trying to convince itself that it hoped the next; the alternative — dead, or in a Southern prison. The horrors of Andersonville, Belle Isle, and the Libby had made thousands of hearts ache with bitter pain; Judge Gray felt as if he could better endure to see his gallant son laid dead at his feet, killed by a merciful bullet, than to know that he was dying by inches, wasting his brave life away in a torture-pen. There were more silver threads among the black curls, when he at last reached Washington. There was considerable red tape still to be overcome (even at that late day of the war), and another long day travelled by before Judge Gray (through the influence of high officials) was on his way to the Virginia Valley where the nation's eyes were turned to watch gallant Phil Sheridan's struggle with the foe. And the delays were too numerous to be catalogued; indeed, they seemed to multiply as he went on.

General Sheridan had again met the enemy and won a battle at Fisher's Hill when Judge Gray reached his head-quarters. The new camp was a scene of most intense activity, and with great difficulty the Judge gained access to the busy commander.

He was met, however, with the blunt cordiality for which the soldier was famous, and as soon as the General learned the errand upon which his visitor had come, he offered him every facility in his power for gaining information, promising that next day a mounted guard should go with him as far into the country as was safe, now that Mosby's guerrillas had become so troublesome.

And with this assurance Judge Gray was fain to rest contented until daybreak, with the earliest gleam of which he intended to begin his search.

CHAPTER XXI.

HOW PUCK KEPT HIS PROMISE.

PUCK sat on the doorstep of the west parlor, looking out over the grass with a meditative face. Inside, Captain Rex was reading "Hamlet" to Dora and grandma, and they had been having quite a cozy morning of it. He read beautifully, and Dora sat listening to the clear, full voice, with a certain guiltiness which made her loth to meet the reader's eye. Puck had been unusually quiet, for him. He liked the reading, and had been much impressed with the grave-digger's conversation, and coaxed to hear it over again, "'Cause you see I'm lonesome without Posy," said he, "an' mus' have some amoosement. Recweation was what Miss Daisy called it when I asked why she an' Aunt Debby went to see Cousin Lemuel."

Captain Rex laughed, but good-naturedly reread part of the scene for Puck, and then laid down the book to hold a skein of worsted for Dora. Puck sat and pondered for some moments, until a violent squacking in the direction of Cato's hen-coops reminded him that there might be a slaughter of chickens for dinner going on; so off he started to assist. He got there somewhat late, however, for Cato was in the act of dangling a fat gander in the air when Puck strolled up.

"Jus' killed de ole gander," said Cato. "'Member de day him run after you and Missy Posy, eh? He make one bery good meal after Chloe hab him in de oven, I reckon."

"I'll help you pick off the feathers, Cato," said Puck, eagerly. "Think there'll be enough for gwandma to make me a bwan new pillow? Aunt Debby won't let me have but one, an' Posy 's is ever so much bigger than mine; I'm the oldest, too."

"Always ought to gib de best to your li'le sister," said Cato, sagely. "Come 'long into de wash'us, massa, and you'll see how many fedders we'll hab."

Puck went with such alacrity that he upset the pan of hot water, and very narrowly escaped scalding his little toes, and his exclamations of pain brought Chloe out to see what was the matter. She scolded them both, and added considerably to the commotion, but then a commotion was pretty certain to accompany Puck's movements under any circumstances; so Dora (when the distant sound thereof reached her ears) only shrugged her pretty shoulders and opined that the raging elements would settle themselves somehow without her assistance, and went on tranquilly with her flirtation with Captain Rex. That gentleman, as has before been said, was intensely curious about the history of the little governess, and he endeavored to beguile Dora into telling him something of it. But, unfortunately for him, Dora knew but little; Aunt Debby was the only person to whom Marjorie had confided anything of importance. But she made the best of what she did know, and gave Captain Rex a little sketch of Marjorie's adoption by Mrs. Randolph, and her subsequent attendance of Mrs. Moulton's school, from whence she had come to them. Altogether it was a very pleasant morning. Grandma took her part in the conversation, and told some stories of Philadelphia in the olden time which delighted Rex. He smiled as he thought how his father would admire her, and fell to wondering if,

"when this cruel war was over," he would ever bring Judge Gray down into Virginia to see this beautiful old Quakeress. So the morning sped away, and they were quite surprised when Cato came to call them to dinner. The smoking-hot goose, stuffed to its utmost capacity, sat erect before grandma's plate; in its bed of green parsley it looked sufficiently appetizing to make Rex feel hungry, and he said so, glancing laughingly at Puck's rapt countenance, as he sat with folded hands, gazing complacently at the fowl. Grandma put the fork into the goose's plump, brown breast, and, roused from his reflections by the movement, Puck gave the company the benefit of them in this wise, —

"Alas, poor gander!" quoth he, heaving a sigh, as he looked gravely toward Mrs. Frost, "I knew him well, gwandma, *a fellow of infinite squack!*"[1]

The shout of merriment that went up from the elders! Grandma laughed until the tears fairly stood in her eyes, and had to delegate the carving to Captain Rex, who declared that Puck's Shakespearean studies would be something marvelous if he went on at this rate. Puck, not quite comprehending what they were all laughing about, beamed serenely at them from his high chair, and helped himself largely to apple-sauce, spilling it plentifully on the table-cloth in the transit.

"Thee sees the gander was terribly noisy," said grandma, when she had finished laughing. "I never did see such a bird."

"He must be a lineal descendant of the geese who saved Rome," said Rex. "Here 's the wish-bone for you, Puck. You had better keep it until Posy gets home.

[1] The above witty paraphrase was actually made by a child of Puck's age in the author's family.

After you've broken it, you can give it to me as a trophy."

"What 's a twophy?" said Puck.

"A trophy — what shall I say to make myself intelligible?" said Rex, appealing to Dora. But his further explanation was prevented by the sudden appearance of Joe, Cato's son, who came running in with a face as ghastly as it was possible for a frightened darky's to be.

"O, Missis — O!" gasped the boy, coming close to Mrs. Frost's side. "Dar 's a lot of sogers comin' — gray fellers. Li'le Sam heerd 'em talking down in the corner field, an' dey say dat de spy am at Mistis Frost's, and dey 's boun' to catch him now for sure!"

Dora's face turned white as marble. Captain Rex sprang to his feet.

"Do not be alarmed," said he to the old lady. "I must escape if I can, and Cato will see to that."

Mrs. Frost drew herself up erect. "Wait, friend," raising her hand; "thee is not safe inside the house, for if they have come to search, they will do it thoroughly. Thee has five minutes — no more. Cato, take him and hide him inside the largest hay-cock which is stacked by the barn. Young man, be not afraid for us; the Lord takes care of his people."

Rex paused one brief second to raise the aged hand to his lips reverently, and then followed Cato's hobbling steps to the hay-cock, and crawled inside the aperture. It was his only chance, and he felt it to be a slight one, as there was no doubt but that the guerrillas would pounce directly upon his hiding-place, unless something miraculous interposed. Cato packed the hay up loosely, leaving a hole or two for the prisoner to breathe, and then went back to the house as fast as his legs could carry him, get-

ting behind his mistress's chair, waiter in hand, just as the cavalry dashed up to the door.

In the mean time, Dora had removed Captain Rex's plate from the table, and, discovering that Puck was missing, pulled his high chair away, and sat down, thinking, "Well, if I say nothing, the child will probably tell. I wish my tongue had been bitten out before I said a word to Harry."

Wishes of that kind were useless now, and her heart sank as she heard the officer outside give orders to surround the house, adding that half the party might go down to the negroes' cabins.

"Why, Lieutenant Hayes!" exclaimed Dora, as that gentleman made his appearance in the door of the apartment, "where in the world do you come from?"

"It strikes me, friend, that thee is taking liberties with my dwelling," said grandma, looking at the men who appeared behind the Lieutenant.

"Beg pardon, ma'am," said Hayes, recollecting himself and doffing his hat. "You see, you'll have to excuse us."

"Thee has left me no choice," said grandma, quietly.

"We've had certain information that the spy, Rogers, who I was talking about last night, has been here, or is here now, and I shall have to search the premises. Not that I suppose the man to be in the house, Miss Lyndon," added he, "but there 's no telling what these niggers will be up to. This old fellow looks as if he could tell me something," wheeling about suddenly and confronting Cato.

"Me? Laws, massa, dis chile don't know nuffin, no more an' the dead," said Cato, with an aggravatingly innocent countenance.

"You don't, eh? By the way," glancing suspiciously around the room, "where 's the rest of the family — Miss Debby and that pretty white-faced Northerner?"

"They have gone to visit a relative," said Dora, coldly.

Lieutenant Hayes had evidently been drinking, and his manner bordered upon familiarity. For once a Confederate was distasteful to her.

"Quite sure?" said he, laughing coarsely. "Well, ma'am," to Mrs. Frost, "can my men go up-stairs? I told Peyton that everything should be done amiably, with regard to your feelings."

"I am obliged to thee," said grandma, ironically, as she moved back from the table and took her knitting out of her pocket. "Cato, thee can go with these persons, and show them that I harbor no spy in my household. Sit down and cool thyself," added she, looking gravely at the red face of the officer.

"Thank you, ma'am; I shall have to go and look after my men," and the Lieutenant disappeared up the stairs.

Dora and grandma exchanged glances.

"Where is Puck?" said the latter knitting on in an unmoved way that drove Dora frantic.

"I'm sure I don't know. Like as not he'll" — Dora's sentence was checked in her throat by the appearance of a gray uniform in the door, the owner of which, having poked in his head and stared stupidly around, followed the others up-stairs.

It is time to return to Puck. In the fright which the sudden intelligence of the arrival of the Confederates had occasioned, that young gentleman slipped down from his perch at the table, and, accompanied by Blot, followed Cato and Captain Rex to the hay-stack. Cato, in his anxiety to get back to the house, never saw the child

(Puck dodged him around the hay-stack with infinite strategy); and five seconds after Cato's departure, Captain Rex was electrified by a small voice outside his hiding-place which said, triumphantly, —

"Don't you be 'fraid! we're here — Blot and me — an' we know how to keep our pwomise."

There was nothing for it but to lie perfectly still, and hope that Master Puck's courage would not be put to the test, but Rex's heart did give a tremendous thump against his ribs when he recognized by the sounds that the party had come out of the house and were making straight for the barn.

"Hello! youngster, what yer doin'?" demanded a coarse voice, as the speaker, a soldier in a sergeant's uniform, came leisurely toward him.

"How d'ye do?" said Puck, politely. "Makin' my dog beg. Speak, Blot!"

Blot "spoke" to some purpose, for he gave a quick bark, and made a dive at the soldier's trousers, out of which he cleverly bit a good sized piece. Blot's Union proclivities were evident.

"Blast the dog!" shouted the man, attempting to kick the little Skye. Blot dodged, and the rest of the party gave a loud guffaw.

The search of the house had not occupied much time, although it was a pretty effectual one; the men hunting in every imaginable spot, and making Chloe furious by upsetting her barrel of soft soap, which, under Miss Debby's supervision she had just made; "jes as if dere was any ole spy hid away in my soap!" sniffled she, flinging her dish-cloth after the retreating figures. Then the party ransacked the out-houses, and now were scattered

into the various cabins, both occupied and unoccupied, finally coming to the barns, and Puck.

"I'll bet these —— people can tell something about that confounded spy," grumbled the sergeant, as he rolled a quid of tobacco under his tongue.

"I say, younker, tell me ef you've seen any man round these cabins?"

"Man?" said Puck, meditatively; "yes."

"When?" shouted the chorus, as the men crowded up.

"Last night," said Puck, mischievously, but looking as solemn as Blot himself.

"What did he look like?"

"He had gway hair" —

"That's not him!"

"An' hobbled."

"Ever seen him afore?" asked the soldiers.

"Yes; good many times. There he comes," said Puck, pointing with his finger. The entire party wheeled about — there stood Cato!

"You young limb, I'll fix you," roared the irascible sergeant, making a stride toward him. "You'd better tell us what you know. I'll bet you know somethin'."

"Don't hurt my dog," said Puck, suddenly, as the man, by a skillful flank movement, captured that small animal, and picked him up roughly.

"Little beast! Bite my trousers, eh?" and down came a blow on Blot's head which made him howl pitifully.

"P'raps you'll make a fool of Bill Stykes," said that personage, addressing Puck. "You don't git yer dog until yer answers a fair question. Hain't yer had a spy — a Yankee, here lately?"

"What's a spy?" said Puck sharply.

"Lord, you're a smart one," said another of the group. "Hain't you had a stranger stayin' here?"

Now as long as Puck could evade the question he felt quite easy, but he was a remarkably truthful child. Under no circumstances had he ever been guilty of a lie; what would Posy say if he told one now? Wouldn't the sky fall on his head? Puck wasn't quite sure, but he felt as if there was a probability of it, so he turned a little pale and lifted his blue eyes.

"Yes," said he boldly. "Please give me my dog."

"Thar!" cried the triumphant sergeant.

"Li'le massa dunno what him sayin'," said Cato, frightened pretty nearly to death. "He 's thinking of Friend Hicks who was here couple days ago."

"Hold your tongue," said Sergeant Stykes, dealing him a cuff which made his eyes water. "Well, younker, go ahead."

"Haven't got anything more to say," said Puck. "Poor Blot! lie still, sir."

"I'll tell yer what," said the rebel, now fully roused by his companions' laughter, and determined not to be baffled by a sturdy child of eight or nine years; "ef you don't tell me what you know t'll be the worse for you. There was a stranger hyar? Whar 's he gone?"

"*I sha'n't tell*," said Puck, defiantly, stuffing his chubby hands into his pockets, and looking straight at the enraged sergeant.

"What 's all this about?" said Lieutenant Hayes, appearing on the scene. The soldiers told him in a few words.

"There 's a good boy; you'll tell me where the man is?" said the officer, in what he imagined were persuasive accents, but which made Puck shrink away. "You're a nice little fellow, and don't like Yankees."

"You made a mistook," said Puck coolly; "mos' wish I was a Yankee my own self. Aunt Debby *is*. We ain't webels in this house;" one of his aunt's thanksgivings on that score returning to his mind at this inopportune moment.

"The deuce you ain't!" cried the Confederate officer, in a rage, in his turn, but not daring to strike the child, as Harry Peyton had told him to be careful not to misuse the family. "We'll see, my fine fellow. Bill," to the sergeant, "if he won't tell what he knows, *just take a rope and hang his dog!*"

Puck did not believe they would do anything of the kind, so he stood in stupefied amazement watching the soldier, who drew a halter out of his pocket and began to tie a slip knot around poor Blot's neck. "Just hang him over the limb of that tree," said the lieutenant, with an evil look, pointing to one which stood near them. "Now, boy, tell, or up he goes!"

"O, massa, don't hurt li'le Blot; he bery good dog," cried Cato; "Puck bery fond of him — bery!"

"I'll give you one minute," said the officer to Puck.

"*I pwomised*," said Puck, gulping down a lump in his little throat, "an' I never bweak my word. Blot! O, Blot! my dear, *dear* dog."

The hay-stack behind the excited party shook ominously, but they were too much occupied to notice it.

"Up with him," ordered Hayes. The sergeant gave the rope a pull; Blot kicked convulsively; his eyes turned upon his little master; he tried to bark —

Puck shut his eyes.

"Cut down that dog," thundered an indignant voice, as a tall figure shot past Cato. The amiable Bill Stykes let go the rope in sheer surprise; it loosened suddenly,

and Blot fell to the ground. "As for you, sir, you are a fiend incarnate," and Captain Rex gave Hayes a blow which made him blind and deaf for some seconds, and laid him flat on the road several yards distant.

"De Lord hab mercy!" cried Cato, wringing his hands, as the men crowded around Rex and captured him by mere force of numbers. "O, massa, dey'll kill you for sure!"

Hayes gathered himself up slowly and approached his prisoner. Rex threw back his head, and his most disdainful smile curved his short upper lip, as he fixed his blue eyes on the Confederate.

"You'll swing for that," was Hayes' significant remark as he shook his fist in his face. "Fool! If you hadn't had such an awful amount of sympathy for a *dog*, you might have escaped."

Puck looked up from the ground where he sat with his rescued pet in his arms, the tears which his tormentors had not been able to bring, pouring down his cheeks.

"You're a bwave, *bwave* soldier," cried he, between his sobs, "an' I wish I was like you, an' a Yankee! I wouldn't be a nasty, howid *webel;* I *hate* 'em!" and he shook his chubby fist passionately at the men.

"Puck," Captain Rex's eyes filled, and his clear voice was a trifle husky, "you're a hero! Whatever happens to me, tell your Aunt Debby that I said so. I wish I could tell the boys at the North how you keep a promise."

Grandma and Dora were on the piazza as the party drew near, Cato and Puck bringing up the rear, and Blot panting painfully in his little master's arms.

"We've got him," said Hayes, triumphantly.

"Friend," said grandma, "bring that young man here."

Hayes hesitated, but finally remembering the Peytons, he motioned to his men to bring up the prisoner.

"Does thee mean to tell me that he is a *spy?*" said grandma, turning her clear eyes from captor to prisoner.

"Reckon he'll swing for one," said Hayes, grimly.

"Where art thou going with him?" said grandma, maintaining her calm demeanor with difficulty.

"Into Early's camp. He'll be tried by drumhead court-martial in twenty-four hours, and shot, or hanged, I don't care which," said Hayes, with a brutal smile.

"Man!" said the old lady, "I know not which to admire most, thy malice or thy inhuman brutality."

"I am sorry to have brought this upon you," said Rex, interposing. "If I live, you shall hear from me again, and — if I die, give me your prayers."

"Thou hast them," said the gentle Quakeress, her eyes full of tears, through which she saw the handsome face of the prisoner but dimly. "The God of thy Puritan fathers bless thee, young man."

Hayes burst in with a string of oaths, in which he cursed the Puritans from the *Mayflower* down, the Federal Government, and the Stars and Stripes.

"Go out of my doors," said grandma, rising suddenly, carnal-mindedness getting the better of her Quaker training, at this insult. "I wonder my roof does not fall and crush thee. Abuse *me*, man, if thou wilt; my old head will soon lie on its earthy pillow; but dare not to curse and swear at the country of the Puritans, or to defile *my* flag while my feeble voice can be uplifted in reply."

The beautiful old eyes flashed, the aged form trembled with emotion; without a word, the man turned on his heel and slunk down the steps. Grandma and Barbara Freitchie would assuredly have shaken hands.

Dora stood at the steps as Rex went down them. "Good-by," he said, smiling bravely. "Kiss me, Puck; tell Miss Daisy not to forget" — he stopped. How could a message avail now, he thought, with a sudden pang. They mounted him between two troopers, and in another moment the party were dashing down the avenue at full speed. A farewell nod from Rex, and they were gone.

"He saved my dear, dear Blot," sobbed poor Puck, creeping to his grandmother's feet with a broken-hearted wail. "An' he said I was a *hewo*, an' I'll love him all my life! He 's better'n Joshua an' Saul, an' David, all put together — there!" And with his face buried in Blot's neck, Puck wept bitterly, and refused to be comforted.

CHAPTER XXII.

IN THE REBEL CAMP.

VERY early, almost at sunrise, Aunt Debby, Marjorie, and Posy had set out for Friend Hicks', accompanied by the spy and Jim, the black boy who served as coachman.

Rogers might have been taken for a most respectable Quaker preacher; he was attired in Reuben Frost's best suit (which, fortunately for Aunt Debby's peace of mind, fitted him pretty well), and he had stored his black wig away in some hidden receptacle about his person, suffering his long white locks to float around his shoulder, crowned by his broad-brimmed hat. Had it not been for the sinister expression of his eyes, and a certain restless trembling and twitching of his hands, you would have supposed him to be a venerable man of position and good circumstances; quite the patriarch of the party.

Aunt Debby took one of her violent prejudices to him on the spot. "Get him inside on the back seat," said she, in a whisper to Marjorie, as they stopped at Cato's cabin to take Rogers up, "and don't let him come too near *me!* Sneak, every inch of him," and she deposited Posy between her knees very much as if she was afraid to let the man touch her pet. The ride to Friend Hicks' was a long one at all times, but made longer now from Jim's intense fear of running against unpleasant customers. The road was a bad one, the ruts heavy and deep, and Posy declared that "her bones were sore, and she guessed they'd come right out of her elbows, me

dear," before they had gone half way. And when they were yet about two miles distant from Friend Hicks' house, a wheel broke down, which delayed them some time, and caused them to fall in with very unpleasant company. They were all standing on the roadside, Jim hammering away at the unlucky wheel, when they were suddenly startled by an exclamation from Rogers.

"Thunder and blazes! we *are* in a fix no mistake."

Aunt Debby dropped the reins on Black Prince's back, and looking up the road, to her horror, beheld a small company of troopers attired in the unwelcome gray coats. "Nothing for it but to sit down and let them come up," said she. "War times in earnest, I guess. I'd as lief as not be in down east Massachusetts."

"Look there!" cried Marjorie, joyfully, standing up in the back of the cart, and waving her handkerchief.

"Told you we were in a bad box," muttered Rogers; "just between fires, you'll see."

Over the field at the left of the party in the road, came at least fifty United States soldiers. They rode splendidly, their sabres gleaming brightly in the sunlight. Marjorie's lips trembled; she had it in her heart to cry like a baby at sight of the dear old blue. As yet they had not perceived the guerrillas, but it was evident, by the wavering of the Confederates, that they were aware of the enemy's approach with a larger force than their own, for the leader, a man on a powerful brown horse, turned to say something to those behind him. He was too late, for there was a sudden unintelligible order shouted by the Union leader; a blinding dust; a clatter of hoofs, and the troopers flashed by like a whirlwind.

"Ha! there they go — hurrah!" shouted Rogers.

"Bully for de Lincom sogers!" shrieked Jim, nearly

beside himself, and morally certain that he was going to be killed.

The skirmish was over as suddenly as it began. Marjorie and Aunt Debby had hardly time to clear the dust from their eyes and throats before a pleasant voice at the side of the cart said, "I hope you were not frightened, ladies. That was a very bloodless affair."

"Humph!" said Aunt Debby, strangling over the last grain of dust. "Wouldn't have minded if you'd killed 'em every one. Suppose we shake hands, friend; I haven't seen a Yankee in some time, and I feel mighty friendly."

The young officer laughed merrily as he bent over and complied with the spinster's request. He had a bright fresh face, notwithstanding the bronzing which campaigning had given him, and a mischievous pair of dark eyes.

"I'm the genuine article," said he, "straight from the 'Hub,' ma'am, and so are my men — the only regiment from the Old Bay State in the Valley."

"All the better," said Aunt Debby, heartily. "Hope you gave it to those, fellows," nodding her head in the direction of the guerrillas.

"Captured a dozen, or so," said he, carelessly. "The rest showed a clean pair of heels very cleverly. Anything I can do for you, ladies?"

"Yes; take our venerable friend here with you — he belongs to you," said Aunt Debby, wheeling around so suddenly that Posy nearly lost her balance. "I was helping this man to get away, and I sha'n't mind a bit if you'll take him off my hands."

"All right, Captain Romilly," said Rogers, jumping down from the cart, and going around to the officer's bridle. "I've been lying around a week trying to get off

with a bundle of papers — they like to have cost me dear."

Captain Romilly stared. "You seem to know me, my good fellow," said he, "but I'm hanged if I know *you*."

"Ain't accustomed to my gray hair," said Rogers, pulling out the wig which he usually wore. "Look more natural now, eh?"

"Hum — yes," said Captain Romilly, reflectively; "I've seen you in Custar's tent. Well; you may get a mount from my men; I'll see that you get safely into camp."

"Stop him!" cried Marjorie, suddenly, her sweet face flushed with excitement as she sprang up. "He promised — O, Miss Debby — *you* know he promised to give me the information which I've wanted so long."

"Attend to the young lady," said Captain Romilly, sharply, as Rogers turned with a sullen face.

With instinctive delicacy, Aunt Debby began a conversation with the Union officer, while Rogers went around to the side of the cart, and spoke to Marjorie in an undertone.

"You kept your promise," said he, reluctantly; "that is, you did, and you didn't — but I'm safe now, and likely to get within the Union lines, so I don't mind telling you what I meant to. You just go home to Philadelphia, *and ask General Clive who your father was.*"

Her face changed painfully.

"You are deceiving me!" she panted, tears rushing to her eyes.

"Am I?" said Rogers, with a queer smile. "You try it. I don't say for sure, mind — I warned you of that. But General Clive is a friend of your father's, and knows your name — I'll swear to that. And," coming

close to her side, "you may tell him that Dan Rodman said so, and told you to ask him."

Marjorie sat still in the cart, her hands clasped over her heart, but she did not speak until the last trooper was out of sight, and then she crept close to Aunt Debby.

"Go on, Jim," said that lady; "as long as we've come so far we may as well go to Cousin Lemuel's and stay over night. We've got rid of the rapscallion, thank the Lord! Daisy," a softening of the mouth as her searching eyes scanned the young girl's face, "what is it? Didn't he keep his word?"

"I can't tell," said Marjorie, mournfully. "He only told me of some one whom he says knows who I am. And it seems so improbable. He told me to tell General Clive that Dan Rodman sent me to ask him about my father. Do you believe that General Clive knows?"

"It 's a shame," said Miss Debby, warmly. "Well, there 's no earthly harm in *asking*, as I can see. George Clive, eh? Wasn't that the one who had some queer quarrel with his father?"

The color flew back into Marjorie's face. "It can't be — you don't suppose?" she faltered incoherently. "Why, ever so long ago, when I first came to Mrs. Randolph's, she told me a story about her uncle George, one day when she was showing me her jewels, and I saw a picture of him" —

"Well?" said Aunt Debby, interrogatively, as Marjorie paused.

"I was trying to think," said she, starting. "It was something about his marriage that his father was displeased with — O! Miss Debby — you don't *ever* suppose that he could be *my father?*"

It was good to hear the lingering of Marjorie's sweet voice on those two words.

"Child," said good Aunt Debby, kissing her, "don't worry yourself into a fever. If he is, *he is*, and you'll find it out; if he is not, you'd only have an awful disappointment. Do you want to go back and find out? I won't stand in the way. But I'm free to confess that if a letter would do to begin matters, it would please me. More especially as I'm beginning to think we won't be safe around here very much longer; if we've *got* to go North (grandma, the children, and I), we can all pull up sticks and go together. She'll hate to leave the place; but if we're going, we might as well go while the money lasts. I'll consult Cousin Lemuel about it this very day."

Friend Hicks' house was a snug little place, under the shadow of the Blue Ridge Mountains, and looked quite neat, considering that it was war times and money and labor scarce. The grim Quaker himself, in a broad-brimmed straw hat, was sweeping up the walk which led to his front door, and he came down to the cart broom in hand.

"I'm pleased to see thee, Deborah Frost," said he; "and thee, friend Daisy, and thee, Posy. Thee 's all welcome. But where 's Puck?"

"There wasn't room," said Posy, "and he was awful sorry. But I told him I guessed you'd send him some peppermints, and he told me not to forget."

"Posy!" said Aunt Debby's voice, in warning accents. The little maid shrank behind Marjorie, and only emerged from her place of refuge when Friend Hicks, with a chuckle, told her to go into the front room and see if she did not find a plate of ginger-snaps.

"We came to ask your hospitality for an unfortunate man, whom we didn't dare to harbor," said Aunt Debby,

removing her bonnet, and making herself comfortable in a rocking-chair. "But luckily for you — and the rest of us — we met a party of Union soldiers who kindly took him off our hands; and a party of guerrillas," added she, creasing her bonnet strings carefully. "Have you had any trouble that way?"

"Plenty," said Friend Hicks, after listening to the account of their adventures. "I should have done my best for thee had'st thou brought the man here, but thee sees we are no ways secure just now."

"Dear me," said Aunt Debby with a rueful countenance. "This will make it bad for our other guest, Daisy."

"More spies?" said Friend Hicks, with a dry look.

"No, indeed," said Aunt Debby, indignantly. "I wish you could see him, Cousin Lemuel; the nicest, most respectful young man I've seen for many a day. Well, we won't borrow trouble; I guess the way of escape will open somehow."

They had a quiet, pleasant afternoon in Friend Hicks' cool parlor. Posy coaxed Marjorie to take her out for a walk while Cousin Lemuel and Aunt Debby were talking over dry business details.

The woods were lovely, and Posy was enchanted; and in hearing the little maid's quaint chatter, Marjorie partially forgot her disappointment of the morning, and (in her thoughts) composed the letter which she meant to write to Virginia.

Friend Hicks was anxious to have his visitors prolong their stay, but a sort of undefined anxiety on the part of Aunt Debby for the unprotected household which she had left behind made her decline the hospitality, and start early the next day for home.

Friend Hicks concluded to accompany them; he wanted to see Grandma Frost, and talk over the expediency of her removing North during the threatening aspect of things about them. So mounting his gray horse, Friend Hicks rode along with the party, and supplied Posy with a plentiful package of peppermints on their way through Deepwater Run.

This journey was an uneventful one (for which Aunt Debby "thanked her stars" several times), and late in the afternoon they arrived safely at home again.

To use Aunt Debby's expression, "as soon as she set eyes on grandma" she knew something had happened.

The old lady sat with folded hands, her knitting lay on the floor, and Blot was making mince-meat of the ball of worsted, unmolested, while Dora turned pale as her aunt's sharp eyes fell on her face.

"What'n the world's the matter?" demanded Aunt Debby. From the corner emerged a distracted figure; his hair tousled up in one grand friz, his collar hanging down his back, and shoe-strings dragging on the ground, while with a sob Puck made hasty answer, —

"The nasty *howid* webels comed and hanged Blot — only Captain Wex wushed out of the hay-stack and wouldn't let 'em — and they tooked him away to hang *him*. An' he said I was a hewo, an' to tell Aunt Debby — O!"

And the tender-hearted hero, whose tears had flowed plentifully ever since the occurrence, seized his devoted Posy around the neck and went off on a fresh score of sobs.

It would be vain to try to depict Aunt Debby's feelings as Grandma Frost told the story of Lieutenant Hayes' visit and its result. Rex had attracted her greatly, and

even had that not been so, it is but justice to add that the poorest and meanest Union soldier would have been an object of interest to Aunt Debby.

Her patriotism was not of the lukewarm order; indeed, it burned rather the more hotly for its repression, and tears of wrath gathered in her eyes and rolled slowly down her cheeks as she listened.

"In the hands of the Philistines: the Lord help him!" said she.

Marjorie, who had stood with lips apart, and face paling as Dora had told her the story, found her voice at last.

"Miss Debby, we must do *something*," cried she. "Don't you see they have mistaken him for Rogers. He *was* the spy they were looking for — somehow they tracked him here, and they won't stop to look for proof." Marjorie wrung her little hands at her own helplessness. "That man Hayes looked just like a tiger. They'll kill him" — and then Marjorie broke down utterly at the thought of the frank, kindly face, and the brave young life which would be blotted out so ruthlessly. "I'll tell you what," said she, recovering herself in a moment, during which they all looked at her in amazement at seeing the quiet little governess so disturbed; "I 'll take Brown Bess and Cato, and ride down to the rebel camp, and tell them that I helped the real spy away, and that Captain King had nothing to do with it. They won't hurt me, Miss Debby — and I'm not one bit afraid."

"Is the child crazy?" demanded Aunt Debby, glancing at the amazed faces of the circle. Grandma shook her head, and it is hardly probable that Marjorie would have gained consent to make the experiment, had she not received assistance from a most unexpected quarter. "It 's

a brave thought," said Friend Hicks, gruffly, laying his big brown hand on Marjorie's shoulder. "And rather than not have it carried out, I will myself go with thee."

"You?" Aunt Debby was past anything but a monosyllable in the extremity of her surprise. This announcement bid fair to upset her completely.

"O, thank you!" cried poor Marjorie, seizing hold of the big hand. "It will be all right — it *must* be all right now. Miss Debby, may I have Brown Bess?"

"Bless my stars, child, and welcome! Let me get my breath, first."

"Does anybody know where we are likely to find the party who captured Captain King?" said Marjorie.

"I can tell thee," said Friend Hicks, interposing. "The main army with Jubal Early are somewhere this side of Cedar Run. But if thy friend was taken by bushwhackers, it will be next to impossible to track him; does thee know, Friend Frost?"

"The officer said he was going back to join Early," said grandma. "Did he not, Dora?"

"Yes. They were not bushwhackers," said Dora, with a slight return of her old petulance. "They were regular Confederate cavalry; Hayes is in Harry Peyton's company, and belongs to the — Virginia Regiment."

"There is no time to be lost, then," said Friend Hicks, glancing at the setting sun. "Let thy servant give my white nag good measure of oats, then give us a bite of supper, if thee please, Friend Frost, and let us be off. The ride is through the forest, part way, and nigh upon fourteen miles. Put on warmer clothes than these, child," looking at Marjorie's white dress.

"You may have my habit," said Dora, rising, and as Marjorie thanked her with a grateful look, both girls went up-stairs.

That movement aroused Aunt Debby, and springing up, she bustled about, giving Cato directions, and flying out into the kitchen, where, assisted by Chloe, she put up a basket of edibles to be taken by Cousin Lemuel. Marjorie found a supper awaiting her when she came down-stairs, but she could not eat it. She was in an agony of impatience to be off. The subtle, undefined chord of old associations and childish affection, which something in Rex's voice and manner had touched, was ringing painfully, and she could not pretend to account for the pang which shot through her heart whenever the ghastly thought came over her that perhaps they might be too late.

If she lives to be eighty years old, Marjorie will never forget that ride. The night was a comparatively clear one, but the road for miles was overshadowed by trees, through which she caught but occasional glimpses of the stars, and part of the distance was straight through a forest. The smell of the pines, the sound of the whip-poor-will, and the melancholy chirp of crickets and tree-toads; the overpowering sensation of loneliness which made her lay her hand on Brown Bess's neck (glad to feel even that companionship when Friend Hicks acted as a guide, and went before her); all these were photographed on Marjorie's very soul.

It was a long, hard ride. Friend Hicks rarely spoke — for two reasons: first, it was against his custom to waste many words at any time; and, secondly, it was more prudent to be still, not knowing who might be within hearing. He was an excellent guide; he had lived in this vicinity for many years, and knew all the by-roads and shortest paths to any given point for miles around.

The country through which they passed grew more and more desolate: Marjorie shuddered as they rode by houses (or the ruins of houses) which were almost burned to the ground; and Friend Hicks told her in a low whisper of the murder of the gallant Meigs, and how Sheridan had, in retaliation, ordered the burning of all houses within an area of five miles. Assuredly if she had known what war in the Valley was likely to be, Marjorie would never have left her Northern home; but, as the thought crossed her mind, she remembered that it was only since her stay here that she had obtained even a faint clew to her father, and she said herself that the growing hope was worth the trials and fear of her present position.

The ride with all its *detours* was nearer twenty than fourteen miles, and it was long past midnight when Friend Hicks caught Marjorie's bridle-rein in his hand, and spoke.

"We must be very near them, now," said he; "unless my memory fails me there is a hill"—

"Halt! Who goes there?" said a strange voice, on their left, followed by the click of a musket.

"Friend," said the Quaker, quietly.

"Advance, friend, and give the countersign," was the reply.

But as the strangers stood still, the picket began a conversation, first prudently covering the old man with his musket.

"How many of you are there?" said he with a true Southern drawl. "And what are yer doing hyar?"

"We want to go to Jubal Early's head-quarters, friend," said Friend Hicks, ignoring titles as usual. "If thee will conduct us there in safety, we will be much

beholden to thee. We have somewhat of importance to say to thy commander."

"What'll 'thee' say if I won't?" demanded the soldier mimicking him as he sounded the signal for the picket guard. "We don't let strange folks inside our lines often."

"I should desire thee not to be so discourteous," said the Quaker coolly. Then there was a noise of other feet, and half a dozen men came up under charge of a corporal.

He (the corporal) was more civil than their first questioner had been, and after putting a great many questions to the Quaker, and flinging the blaze of a pine torch on Marjorie's face, he finally consented to take them inside the lines to his superior officer, and, provided that gentleman consented to pass them along, to General Early's head-quarters.

Marjorie had again to undergo the ordeal of being stared at by a sleepy-looking, obese young man in a major's uniform, who evidently was curious to know what had brought a young and pretty girl into the camp in the middle of the night; and he questioned them pretty closely.

"I don't see but what you'll have to wait until daybreak," said he, at last; "no" — checking himself — "that won't do. Hadn't you better leave your errand with me?"

"That is quite impossible," said Marjorie, speaking for the first time, and looking pleadingly out of those lovely gray eyes of her's at the officer. "My business with General Early is urgent; I will not detain him long."

"They're up in the General's tent, yet," said one of the men, in a loud whisper, touching his hat, as the major looked around at him.

"Well," reluctantly, "I hope I sha'n't get blamed for it. There 's a consultation going on up at head-quarters. Come along; perhaps I can get hold of the General."

Marjorie and Friend Hicks followed the officer up a slight decline of ground, at the top of which stood a tent, from whence proceeded the sound of several voices. As they reached the sentry posted outside, two officers lifted the curtain of the tent and came out, looking keenly at the little group, and acknowledging the major's salute as they passed down the hill,

There were a few moments of impatient waiting, a sudden sinking of her brave little heart, as she dismounted in obedience to the orderly's signal, and then Marjorie found herself in the presence of the Confederate General whose raids had made his name famous.

"Friend," said the old Quaker, standing erect, without removing his hat, "Daisy Russell desires to speak with thee." And having thus performed the introduction, Friend Hicks said not one word further until he was obliged to.

"Will Miss Russell be seated?" said a rather formal voice, and as Marjorie raised her head she saw a pair of quick, restless eyes set underneath heavy, grizzled brows looking keenly at her. Another officer wearing the uniform of a general sat at the other side of the table, and as Marjorie drew a step nearer, in his turn, he raised his head and surveyed her curiously.

"I would rather stand," Marjorie said, her lips setting themselves in the old, firm line with which, when a child, she used to confront any disagreeable task.

"I came to ask you, sir, about a Union officer whom Lieutenant Hayes captured yesterday afternoon on the estate of Mrs. Frost. Is he in your camp?"

"If you mean the spy, Rogers, he will be tried by court-martial," said Early. "He is the only prisoner whom I think of — stay, there was a general officer who was brought in last night. Do you mean him?"

"No," said Marjorie; "I mean — the officer whom Lieutenant Hayes captured. I know all about Rogers, and I am prepared to swear that this gentleman is not he."

"Indeed," said the General, with an incredulous smile. "And pray, what proof can you give of the truth of your assertion?"

"Only this" — growing a shade paler: "The spy Rogers *was* on Mrs. Frost's plantation, although she knew nothing of it. I assisted him to escape, and yesterday escorted him to a place of safety."

General Early forgot himself, and swore a round oath. "And you dare to stand there and tell me of it?"

"I have ridden eighteen miles to tell you so," she said, her voice wonderfully quiet, as she tried to still the convulsive throbbing of her heart. "Do you suppose I would suffer an innocent man to be hung for a spy, and not open my lips in his defense?"

"Is the prisoner a relation of yours?" said the other officer, laying down his pen, and speaking in a very polished manner.

"Sweetheart, perhaps?" said Early.

The bright blood flew in torrents into her pale cheeks. "I think that has nothing to do with my errand," she said, with gentle dignity.

The general at the table gave an imperceptible frown; Early turned over some notes on the table.

"What is the young man's name?" said he.

"I do not know — it may be King," said Marjorie, hesitating for the first time.

"He gave his name here as Captain Gray, New York Cavalry," said Early. "Hayes and his men were positive that he was the notorious Rogers, and I ordered him for further examination, solely because I believe the spy to be an older man. Young lady, if your testimony is true, I will send the prisoner to Richmond; but you will have to identify him."

"I don't know that I can say anything positively about his name and rank," said Marjorie, steadily. "He said expressly, when he first came to us, that he would not give his full name for fear of getting us into trouble. But I know his face," — the vivid blush returning again, under the General's meaning smile.

"Describe him," said Early, looking at the paper in his hand.

"He is very handsome," began Marjorie; then stopped, in some confusion. "That is, I think so," she added, naïvely. "He is very tall, and has chestnut-brown curls, and blue eyes, — very deep blue, — and a long, fair mustache, and a dimple in his chin."

"That is a tolerably correct description of the young man," said General Early. "And you are prepared to swear positively that, whoever the prisoner may be, he is not Rogers?"

"I am."

"Will the young lady tell us where Rogers is now?" said the other general.

"I cannot answer the question accurately. A party of Union soldiers met us (as I was helping him off), and they took him with them."

"Friend," said the Quaker, suddenly breaking silence, and totally ignoring the danger of such an admission, "it is true. It was to my house she was bringing the man.

Thee knows I am a man of peace, and he would have been safe there. She arrived without him; the child's story is true."

"Better send the young Captain to the Libby," said Breckenridge, in a whisper to Early. He nodded; then called his orderly.

"Are the prisoners who came in yesterday in the guard-house?"

"Yes, General."

"Take a pine torch, then, and go ahead of us. I propose to visit one of them."

There was a gray look about the sky as they emerged from the tent, which betokened the approach of dawn, and a sort of subdued stir in the camp which seemed to tell of some movement of the troops. Early lit a cigar, with a brief apology to Marjorie as he did so, and walked on, by the young girl's side, until they came to the place where the prisoners were confined. The light of the torch fell upon several sleeping forms; and Rex, who had been dreaming of home, and the night long ago when he had looked at the stars with Marjorie, opened his eyes and sprang to his feet.

"Where is the man whom Hayes captured?" said Early's impatient voice.

"Present," said two voices, and Rex, not more than half awake, stumbled over one of his companions in his haste.

"That is he," said Marjorie, stepping forward where the light fell aslant her pale face and golden hair.

"*Marjorie!*" In Rex's excitement and surprise, the word fell from his lips before he was aware; but she was too full of her errand to even hear it. She walked directly up to him, and put out her hand frankly.

"I am in time," she said, her soft eyes dilating with pleasure. "The spy Rogers was on the plantation, and he was the man whom we took away. You are safe now — is he not?" and she turned to General Early. The General shrugged his shoulders.

"I have promised this young lady that you shall be forwarded to Richmond with the rest," he said, briefly.

"Do not look so sorry," Rex managed to whisper to Marjorie, as he saw her face change sorrowfully. "There *is* such a thing as exchanged prisoners, you know, and that 's better than being shot for a spy. Some day, when the war is over, you will let me thank you for your courage and bravery?"

He kissed her hand in his chivalrous, courtly way, raised his cap to the General, and in another second the door closed, and she was gone.

"God bless her!" thought Rex, with a tumultuous thumping of his heart which made him feel rather oddly bewildered. "Will I ever have a chance to find out whether my suspicions are correct?"

"Young man!" — a hot, feverish hand grasped his, and a pair of eager eyes gleamed brightly down at him even in the semi-darkness of the apartment; "for God's sake, tell me who that was!"

"The lady?" said Rex, startled by the tone of the speaker.

"That young girl with golden hair whom you called Marjorie."

"Did I?" said Rex, in amazement. "Then I must have spoken my thoughts out loud. Her name is Daisy Russell."

"It cannot be!" cried the speaker, vehemently. "She

is Madeline's living self — my child, my dear little child!"

He staggered backward, his eyes closed, and Rex caught him in his arms and laid him gently down upon the floor.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AT WINCHESTER.

"HALLO! guard, bring some water here, and hurry up about it," said Rex, unfastening the officer's vest, and discovering that he had merely swooned. One of the other prisoners happened to have a little brandy left in his pocket flask, and they got a portion of it down his throat, and, after chafing his hands, he revived.

"He ought to be in the hospital," said the other, in a whisper to Rex. "He had a particularly ugly wound in the arm, when they captured him yesterday, and I don't think that the surgeon knew his business who came to look at it. Know who he is? General Clive, of Crook's Division."

"Clive?" said Rex, wondering where he had heard the name before.

"Did you speak?" said General Clive faintly, catching his name. "O, I remember — I fainted."

"Yes," said Rex. "Take the rest of this brandy. I shall send for the surgeon, if I can get the guard to go. Are you in pain?"

"Not so much as during the early part of the night," said General Clive. "Never mind my arm just now. Will you tell me your name, sir?"

"Reginald Gray," said Rex; "I am in Custar's Division."

"Gray! Any relation of Judge James Gray?" said General Clive, suddenly remembering that the Judge had a son in the army.

"His only son," said Rex, smiling. "Do you know my father?"

"Only by reputation. I wrote him a letter a short time since to beg for information of a little girl, whom I have reason to think resided in your family at one time."

Rex gave a hasty exclamation. "I never knew such a coincidence in my life! My dear sir, I believe I can give you all the details you desire. Let me offer you my blanket in this corner, where I think we can talk undisturbed."

Rex's amazement may be imagined, as General Clive gave him a hasty outline of his search for Marjorie, and the curious clews, which, one by one, had come into his hand, leading him, at last, to Judge Gray's. So this was Marjorie's father; this soldierly, sad-eyed man, who spoke so tenderly of his lost wife and child; could it be possible that, after all these years, the old boyish promise which he had made to his little playmate would be redeemed, and that he should indeed "find her father?"

But if Rex's surprise was great, General Clive's interest in the long story which the young captain told him is hardly to be described. Judge Gray's letter had never reached him, and Percy Clive had delayed writing, purposely, until he should have certain information to give; and, therefore, the account of Marjorie's life at the Grays', her adoption by Mrs. Wylder, and subsequent disappearance was all new to her father. But Rex could not supply the hiatus in her history; he could only add an account of his stumbling upon this sweet little Daisy Russell, whose startling likeness to the child he had loved had almost convinced him that it must, indeed, be her very self. And when Rex, after telling all this, added the story which Dora had told him of Marjorie's being

educated, and cared for, by Mr. Selden Clive, the General's excitement became almost painful to witness; he clasped his hands over his eyes, and his powerful frame shook with emotion.

"Don't, pray don't," said Rex, as the General tried to utter a few words of gratitude. "She was the sweetest child I ever knew, and one could not but love her. Keep all that for my father — my *dear* father," and under the heavy mustache Rex's lips quivered as he thought that he would give half the world — anything — to see that father's face once again. "Hark!" said Rex, suddenly, a familiar sound greeting his ears. "There is — there *must* be a movement of the troops. An attack — listen!" as a distant sound of musketry thundered on the air. "O, if I was only there! Guard!"

But that functionary paid no heed to the call, and the handful of Union prisoners crowded together, and began to calculate the chances of escape.

Certainly those chances did not grow brighter, when, some two hours later, the conversation of the soldiers outside revealed to the anxious listeners that Early had attacked the Federals at daybreak, and driven them back three or four miles, capturing artillery and routing them completely.

"Routing 'em, eh?" quoth an indignant private, whose nasal accents betrayed his claim to the epithet of Yankee. "I'd like tu get hold of t'other end of that yarn. Yeou jest hold on till yeou hear what little Phil has to say."

After long waiting there came a change for the prisoners. A squad of troopers dashed up and ordered them all to turn out; "they were to be taken to the rear," said the commander of the troop, and that was all the information vouchsafed them.

"Dew tell!" whispered Private Slocum to Rex, with a dry chuckle. "Shouldn't wonder if Phil had been havin' his say, Capting."

Other people might have been found to concur in Private Slocum's opinion when the story of that 19th of October flashed over the length and breadth of the land, telling how gallant Phil Sheridan rode from Winchester down to join his army, and plucked the laurels of victory from the talons of defeat. Can we ever forget the dawn of those days which —

> "Hailed news on news, as field on field was won;
> When Hope, long doubtful, soared at length sublime,
> And our glad eyes, awake as day begun,
> Watched Joy's broad banner rise, to meet the Rising Sun."

The Union prisoners in the rebel camp, however, had but meagre tidings of the change in the fortunes of war, and it was not until a second order came for them to fall further back that the first hope of making his escape really took possession of Captain Rex. He had kept close by General Clive all day, and now the idea occurred to him that perhaps by watching their opportunity they might elude the guard and slip off into the surrounding thickets. One by one, the troopers guarding them grew less; the wounded and dying were coming in fast, in the few ambulances, and about the middle of the afternoon a simultaneous retreat began, which soon increased into a panic.

"Now 's your time," whispered Private Slocum, catching a stray horse by the bridle. "Put the General on this ere beast, an' yeou an' me'll make eout, somehow, I calkalate."

Taking advantage of a demoralized company who were trooping up over the hill, the Union prisoners scattered

in three or four different directions, Rex and Private Slocum on either side of General Clive's horse, and, after a successful *détour* of over a mile they came out in the direction of the field of battle, as was evident by the din and smoke, and the straggling men and horses. Half a mile further they had just time to partially conceal themselves, when, in a whirl of dust, driving a number of Confederates before him, Custar dashed by bare-headed, fighting recklessly as was his wont, in the thickest of the fray.

"I can't stand this," said Rex, catching sight of his own corps. "Stand by General Clive, Slocum; I must have a brush at them."

Off he went, with a ringing shout, snatching a sabre from a wounded man, who cheered him as he passed. He had the satisfaction of a sharp tussle with a big Texan, who gave him a scratch in the left shoulder, and a briefer fight with two Georgians, who turned and fled, but it is difficult to say when Rex would have considered it necessary to pause, had not a soldier, who was fighting bravely just in front of him, been struck by a rebel sharp-shooter, and falling backward, nearly blinded Rex by the stream of blood that poured over him.

"Guess I'm done for this time," said the man, as Rex, staggering to his feet, bent down to see if his comrade still lived. "Can't you drag me out of this a little, and let me find a quiet place to die?"

That was an appeal which could not be made in vain to Reginald Gray, and presently, to General Clive's surprise, he came back, panting and breathless, and begged Private Slocum to lend a hand toward bringing the dying man where they were.

They carried him over to the little knoll where Gen-

"GENERAL CLIVE STOOPED OVER HIM."

eral Clive sat, and laid him down under a tree, on a patch of green sward.

"There is a trifle of brandy left in the flask," said General Clive, looking pityingly down at the stream of blood which burst from the soldier's breast with every respiration.

The dying man started wildly.

"Who spoke?" he gasped. "George, George, don't you know me?"

General Clive stooped over him. "My God!" said he, in a voice divided between horror and relief, "I thought you were dead years ago."

"Better for some of us if I had been," said Rodman, bitterly, — "you among the number. George, I did care for you in the old college days, but I've treated you like a dog since then. Suppose you just say you forgive me before I die."

"You don't know all the evil I have done you and yours," said Rodman, as General Clive pressed his hand. "Perhaps you'll not find it as easy to say, when I tell you of it."

"Give me the rest of that brandy," said he, faintly. "Ah! that makes me feel my own man again. You stay here," as Rex moved a little away, thinking that perhaps General Clive would prefer to be alone with the man; "it 's just as well to have a witness to this, and I'll soon be out of reach of anybody's censure."

"You didn't know how far down the social scale I fell, during your residence abroad, George," said Rodman, after a short pause, in a much firmer voice. "When your letter came asking me to send over the sums which your brothers allowed you at stated periods, and wishing me to continue to forward them to your wife after you

had sailed for home, it found me in a precious tight box. I had, all along, been aching to pocket some of it. And then I felt that I could do so with impunity. So I took half of the first three remittances; the fourth, I appropriated entire. But, one day, I was struck with consternation to see a letter (which I knew must be from your wife) come to my care; so I opened it. I found that she had taken passage in the *Irelandais* with the child, under the name of Williams. You were too ill to discover anything; I met Mrs. Clive when she landed, and took her to my own boarding-house."

A groan from General Clive interrupted him.

"Let me get to the end. She came, and was in a frenzy of impatience to see you. I am a cleverish hand at imitating handwriting, so I showed her a few lines from you saying that she must go to your father's and try to obtain his consent to remain there. She was very innocent; she believed me — and she went."

There was a pause; no one spoke, only the labored breathing of the wounded man was heard.

"I was all ready to bolt," he resumed, "and I knew that in sending the poor young woman to your father's I was as good as sending her into the streets. She 's haunted me ever since; I've never been able to get away from that white face of her's. And I did bolt; after my quarrel with your brother I went to Mexico, and when I came back to New York I had sunk to the lowest depths. Can you say 'forgive,' *now*, George?"

Great beads of perspiration stood on General Clive's white forehead.

"I forgot," said Rodman, rousing himself again with difficulty. "I think I can undo a little of the evil. Yesterday, I parted with a girl, who, if she is not your child, is your wife come to life again."

"Where?" cried General Clive and Rex, simultaneously.

"Down on a plantation, with a Quaker family," said Rodman. "Brave and plucky like you, George. She helped me off."

"You are the spy, Rogers?" cried Rex.

"How did you know?—yes," said the other, more and more faintly. "They call her Daisy Russell; she was at your brother's; I saw her there, myself. George," pleadingly, and with a pitiful groping of his hands,—"*can't* you say it, now? *She* would."

General Clive found his voice at last, as he knelt down and took the clammy hand.

"Yes, Dan, for the sake of her you wronged, and the old college days. And — and — I thank you for the information of my child."

"He thanks me," said Rodman, wonderingly. "George — good old George — I wish — *I hadn't*" —

Silence now. General Clive laid the dead spy down, and the others turned away. Presently he came over where Rex and Private Slocum were standing.

"I think I must be getting on where I can find a surgeon," he said, laying his hand on Rex's arm and reeling a little. "My wound is horribly painful. But, before we go, do you think we can mark this place? I'd like to have him buried decently."

Private Slocum "guessed" he could do it, and he went back accordingly; and upon his return they mounted General Clive, and proceeded onward, slowly, for it was with the greatest difficulty that he could retain his seat in the saddle.

Some two miles further on they came across an ambulance and some nurses of the Sanitary Commission,

and but just in time, too, for immediately upon being laid in the ambulance, General Clive lost all consciousness. Rex, however, would not leave him, but accompanied him all the way to Winchester, where the surgeons transferred him to one of the hospitals.

But Rex was so concerned at the apparently dangerous state of the General's wound, that he hardly had time to ask for the details of the battle; he was only aware of a general sense of delight and triumph over a victory. Once in the hospital, upon a bed, and attended by a quiet, capable-looking nurse, he felt that he could leave General Clive, but before doing so, Rex begged for a word in private with the busy surgeon.

"It's bad business," said that gentleman, who was well known to Captain Gray as one of the most skillful professional men in the army. "That arm will have to come off; if I had seen it twelve hours ago, I might have saved it. Now it is impossible, and I shall give him chloroform immediately and have it over; the sooner the better for the patient."

"I will tell him," Rex said, with a sorrowful face. Tired, faint, hungry, and footsore as he was, the brave-hearted fellow never once thought of himself, as he went back to the bedside and broke the news to General Clive. There was a quick, hard breath — a shudder which shook the soldier's whole frame; then he grasped Rex's hand and turned his face to the wall.

"Let it go — soon," he said briefly.

The operation was over at last, and the surgeon nodded with a face of satisfaction, and promised that the General would "do nicely," and Rex was just beginning to realize that the smell of chloroform was desperately nauseating, when a gentle hand was laid on his shoulder, and

a voice, all quivering with suppressed feeling, said softly, "Rex — my dear, *dear* boy!"

And springing up, Rex thought he had never seen so tender and beautiful a smile as that which lit up his father's noble face, and with a sob that was boyish in its homesickness, he laid his chestnut curls beside the silver ones.

"Father, O father! I'm *so* glad you've come!"

Judge Gray used to declare, laughingly, afterward, that Rex took the only dry handkerchief he had, to which the Captain made retort that that was impossible, because he had only *two wet* ones!

It was like a bit of home to the brave young officer, and he cared not a whit if the whole army had been present; he would have wept on his father's shoulder all the same. You see he had not outgrown Regie's warm, loving heart; I am afraid he never will.

So his father carried him off to the quarters where he was staying, and got a meal ready for him, and sat by him while he ate it, hardly taking his eyes off his recovered treasure all the while. How they did talk, to be sure! If Judge Gray had much to say, he also had much to hear, and it would be vain to describe his emotions when he learned that to the child whom his own benevolence had befriended he owed, in all probability, the safety of his only son.

"And so that was General Clive," said he, as Rex, after a hurried story, wound up with that information. "You have kept your word, Rex; you've found Marjorie's father, or (what's far better) her little self, for us. And yet I do believe I shall have to go down and bring her home myself; how will that do? But now, my dear young Paladin and cavalier of distressed dam-

sels, I'm not sure but that you need a great deal of looking after yourself ; that cut on your head must have been a bad one. You will be pleased to take yourself to bed and to sleep ; really, Rex, I am beginning to think there is nothing half so delightful as a blanket and the hard ground to sleep on. What will Aunt Rachel do with such demoralized folk when we go home? Good-night, my boy."

But long after Rex's blue eyes were closed, his father sat beside him, looking lovingly at every feature, and thanking God for bringing his darling boy safe through the perils of war.

CHAPTER XXIV.

FOUND.

THE first thing in the morning Rex went down to the hospital to see General Clive, and, to his infinite regret, he did not find him as well as he had hoped. The surgeon did not seem discouraged, however, but peremptorily forbade all exciting topics of conversation, and the poor patient was forced to content himself with the assurance from Rex that it was "all right about Marjorie," and take his sentence of perfect quietude with what patience he could muster.

Rex himself was in rampant spirits, and all the old merry mischief danced in his blue eyes, as his father and he went about together, arm in arm.

"Wasn't it enough to make a fellow just crazy for joy" thought Rex, as he looked proudly at his handsome father. "A great big victory won by our arm of the service; back again safely, with a pretty sound head, considering the hole that confounded trooper made in it; my dear father here; General Clive turns up in a sufficiently romantic manner; and Madge, my little Madge" — a boyish flush crossed Rex's bronzed face — perhaps it is hardly fair to ask the cause of it.

Some days passed before the surgeon would allow Judge Gray to see General Clive. When they did meet, at last, each conceived a hearty liking and admiration for the other; on General Clive's side there was gratitude too deep for words. Indeed, the few that he did utter agitated him so much that Judge Gray skillfully

turned the subject, by giving the General a succinct account of Mr. Wylder's letter, and of his interview with Mr. Percy Clive.

"You do not think there can be a doubt of her identity?" said General Clive, after hearing all this.

"Hardly," the Judge said, smiling brightly. "I can tell better when I see the child again. There is much for her to explain, even yet, about her disappearance from Mrs. Wylder's. Rex has always declared that Horace Wylder had more to do with it than at first appeared, but I hope that may be only one of his prejudices. His acquaintance with Horace was not calculated to inspire him with any great liking for the boy," and Judge Gray laughed, remembering the scene when Regie "spoke his mind;" "but he ought to forget that now. Poor Wylder has had great trouble with his son; I understand that Horace is a perfect sot, and I heard, a few days since, that his father had been obliged to send him to the Asylum for Inebriates."

General Clive interrupted him by glowing praises of Rex, for whom he had the utmost admiration, and Judge Gray's eyes were moist as he thanked him.

"He is a good fellow — at least we are very proud of him at home. But I began that last long sentence meaning to ask you if you would let me go down to the Valley and see this Daisy Russell. Rex is very positive that she is Marjorie, but I want to look for myself; I think I should recognize the child I carried on my knee that December morning."

"Let you!" exclaimed General Clive. "I have been longing to beg you to go in my stead, and wondering if I dared to ask such a favor. I am tied here," with a glance at the maimed arm, "and the surgeon tells me

that when I can be moved it must be to go home, and I have been chafing for two days over my enforced inactivity. But it hardly seems right to ask you; could not Percy go instead?"

"I will telegraph for your brother to come to you, if you wish," said Judge Gray. "Indeed, I do not think you ought to stay here alone after my departure. But I can't delegate to anybody my journey after little Marjorie — not even her uncle. She took a long journey very recently, at night, for my nearest and dearest" — the Judge's voice shook, "and I must thank her for it."

The two gentlemen talked on until Rex and the nurse came back, the one to carry his father off, and the other to forbid her patient talking any more that morning.

So the Judge went away, promising to look in again before he started, and receiving permission from General Clive to send for his brother Percy to accompany him on his journey North, as soon as he was able to take it. Rex was delighted when he found that his father had determined to go down to the Frosts', and declared his intention of getting leave of absence for two days, to go with him.

"Indeed!" said the Judge, teasingly. "Pray, what do you want to go for? Don't you think I'm old enough to be trusted alone?"

"No, sir," said Rex — "not in Virginia. Alone? You don't suppose I mean to let you start off by yourself? The woods are infested with Mosby's guerrillas, and I don't want you to have a reversion of my recent chance for the Libby. I shall obtain leave from Sheridan to take a handful of men as escort — if I have to tell him the whole story."

"Very well; the troopers will take care of me. Hadn't you better stay with General Clive? He requires care."

"Then the nurse may look after him," said Rex, catching his father's mischievous eye. "You want a guide, don't you? And besides, I haven't thanked Madge properly yet."

"O!" said the Judge, significantly, as Rex turned away wondering what *had* come over him to be bothered with such very inconvenient blushes at precisely the wrong moment.

To return to our little heroine. Friend Hicks and Marjorie found no difficulty in getting away from the rebel camp, after identifying Rex; indeed the General dismissed them hastily, wishing to snatch a few moments' sleep before the attack on the Federal lines, which began at daybreak. The ride back was far easier than the first had been, and they made it much more rapidly than they did at night. But now that the excitement was over, and the necessity of keeping up less pressing, Marjorie began to realize how many hours she had been in the saddle, and it was a very weary, white face that greeted Aunt Debby as she came flying out on the piazza in answer to Puck's cry of, "Hallo! Here 's Miss Daisy an' Cousin Lemuel — O! why didn't you bwing Captain Wex?"

"Thee'd better put that child in bed, Debby," said Friend Hicks, as Marjorie faltered out that "it was all right — we were in time." "She 's had just about as much as she can stand; I'll tell thee the whole story."

Aunt Debby agreed with him, and the procession (consisting of Posy, the repentant Dora, and Aunt Debby) carried the tired girl up-stairs, and literally put her to bed, dosing her with all sorts of delicious compounds, being under the impression that she must be starving.

But whatever schemes of moving and packing Aunt Debby might have entertained, they were speedily put to

flight by a most *mal-apropos* visit from a party of guerrillas. Fortunately for the household of women, they did not seem to be evilly disposed men, except as far as plunder went. Everything that they could lay hands on, of a portable character, they carried away. How Aunt Debby and Cato congratulated themselves upon having buried some of the old china and the two silver tea-sets under a tree down by the cabins! Grandma put all her valuable papers in her pocket, and sat calmly erect in her straight-backed chair while the work of pillage was going on, so composed that even the rough men, after lounging into the room where she sat, went out again, thereby leaving unmolested Puck and Posy's silver cups which were in the side-board drawer.

The guerrillas spent the day lounging about the place, killing the chickens and geese, slaughtering one of the pigs, and teasing and bullying those of the negroes who had not taken refuge in the woods at the first alarm of their approach.

"Well!" said Aunt Debby, after watching their visitors out of sight, sitting down with Posy on her knee, and looking around the room with a rueful countenance at the demoralized appearance of her household gods, "it might have been worse, I suppose; but I do wish they had let Aunt Frost's best bonnet alone. That nasty guerrilla captain made a cocked hat of it."

A shout of laughter, started by Dora and Marjorie, at this novel use of grandma's bonnet, interrupted her; and after gazing blankly at the merry faces of the two girls for a moment, she began to laugh herself.

"We might as well laugh as cry, eh, girls? But he did, I assure you, and it was mighty becoming to his dirty face and red beard. The worst of it is that I don't know what Aunt Frost'll do without it, travelling."

"Hunt up the old one, Debby," said grandma, joining in the fun. "Thee ought to rejoice that the old house is not burned down about our ears, instead of lamenting my best bonnet."

"I did thank the Lord about the silver," said Aunt Debby. "Puck, come out of that glass of apple-jelly; they've taken all the rest — cleaned us pretty well out. Well! we'll try to scrape up enough to eat for two days more, even if we have to call on the neighbors for help. Mercy, I can't sit here fooling. Daisy, come and help me clear up the kitchen; I expect Chloe is in the depths of despair."

The next day was spent in packing. Puck and Posy thought it was great fun, and, as Aunt Debby said, "were under somebody's feet the whole during time," and up to all sorts of mischief, particularly Posy, upon whom the mantle seemed to have descended suddenly. After divers small acts of naughtiness, she was warned not to go near the top tray of Aunt Debby's trunk. Posy intended to be obedient (for she was a good little maid at heart), but a tempting glimpse of some bright blue beads proved too much for her resolution. She did not do much harm in looking at them, to be sure, and as Aunt Debby's back was turned, she thought she might venture to touch one. But Aunt Debby whisked around suddenly, and poor Posy started in such a fright that she knocked a goblet full of water off the table at her elbow, and over it went, splash, into the tray, With many tears, the small sinner confessed that she had been naughty enough to touch the blue beads, and, for the disobedience, Aunt Debby announced that she should whip her. Now whipping was the one punishment that Posy disliked especially, and it invariably roused her temper to its hottest

pitch (to do Aunt Debby justice, she seldom resorted to it) ; but to-day she resisted all Posy's pleading, and carried the culprit off into her own room, and fulfilled her promise.

Marjorie, hearing the shrieks, came flying out of her room and found Puck sitting abjectly on the floor in front of the door, sobbing bitterly, "'cause Aunt Debby was whipping poor dear little Posy." Marjorie tried in vain to comfort him; but when at last the door opened and the little sinner came forth, she was by no means in a subdued frame of mind, as a fragment of the conversation which took place between the pair proved to Aunt Debby and Marjorie.

"I just — hate Aunt Debby!" cried Posy, between her sobs, "She 's a bad — cruel — aunt; an' I don't love her one *bit!*"

"Never mind, dear," said Puck, in a consoling voice, too loyal to his aunt to concur in this sweeping condemnation, but feeling that Posy needed to be comforted. "Never mind, dear. *She don't know any better!*"

"Just hear him!" whispered Aunt Debby; and Marjorie and she had their laugh out, in the closet.

Late in the afternoon as Marjorie came down from the garret, where she had been packing up some household matters for Aunt Debby, she was startled by a sound of horses' feet, and thinking that it might be a second edition of their friends, the guerrillas, she ran down into Dora's room to tell her so. But Dora was not there, and as she reached the hall, Aunt Debby's voice, in tones of suppressed excitement, called her from the stairs.

"Daisy! come right down, quick!"

Regardless of the fact that her long fair hair had fallen down about her shoulders, and thinking from the call

that her presence was so urgently desired that she could not stop to pin it up, Marjorie obeyed. There was a sound of voices in the west parlor; and as she crossed the hall she saw a bright handsome face looking eagerly at her. With an exclamation of pleasure she walked rapidly toward Rex, but before she reached him a half-merry, very tender voice, said suddenly, —

"MARJORIE! Have you forgotten me?"

The effect was electric. Every vestige of color died out of her face; she trembled violently, and passed her hand across her forehead as if just awaking from a deep sleep.

"*Marjorie?*" she said, slowly — "yes, *that was my name!* And you," — a joyous cry as she sprang forward into Judge Gray's open arms — "*you* are the man who taught me 'The Night before Christmas' — but I don't know your name."

"Think again," said the merry voice.

"I can't," she said, bursting into tears. "But this" — putting out her hand — "this is *Regie!* O, Regie, Regie! Why didn't you tell me before? Why didn't I know you?"

"It *must* have been that bandage," said Rex, with such a comical face of perplexity that Marjorie was fain to laugh. "But I knew you, Madge," and his voice was a triumphant one.

"It 's all coming back," said she, clinging to Judge Gray. "I remember the snow and the big cloak. And Barney said, 'It 's his honor' — O!" — seizing his hands — "Judge Gray, dear Judge Gray, I know you now! What has been the matter with me all these years?" And she looked appealingly from one to the other.

"That is for you to tell us, my dear," said Judge Gray,

seating her in a corner of the sofa. "You and Regie may talk it over, while I go and explain to Mrs. Frost what we crazy people are talking about," and crossing the room, Judge Gray sat down by grandma's chair, and with Aunt Debby and Dora in front of him endeavored to give a short account of what had brought him down to their house in this abrupt way.

"It certainly was the bandage," said Marjorie, looking at Rex gravely; so gravely that his eyes danced more mischievously than ever. "If you had looked as you do now that day when Cato brought you home, I should have known you *anywhere*, Regie."

"No, you wouldn't," said he. "It was all papa. I'm jealous of him — upon my word I am."

"Now, Regie," said she, in the old coaxing, half timid voice, "you know better. But I couldn't remember my own name, even. How did you ever find me out?"

"Look at that," said Rex, briefly, putting a picture in her hand. "You haven't altered at all. Madge — you're my" — and there Rex stopped, bungled, and grew red. Perhaps it would n't do to call her "his yellow-haired darling" *now*.

"It does look like me," cried Marjorie. "But was that *all*?"

"No, there were half a dozen things. At first I couldn't think who you kept reminding me of; then, one day, it came over me with a flash. Do you know how? I'll tell you. It was when Posy said you had a doll named Seraphina!" —

"Regie! And you gave it to me, and there was the Christmas tree, and Lily," — cried Marjorie, half wild with the flood of memory which came pouring in upon her. "And who has Seraphina, now? I can't remember."

"Meta. Mrs. Wylder gave her to me, and Meta said you once told her — well!" for his companion turned quite white, and leaned back in her seat. "Have I said anything I ought not?"

"O no," she said, recovering herself. "I remember it all; or it seems to me that I do. There was a dark room," — slowly, like a blind person, groping her way into the past, — "and Horace locked me in with Hyder, the dog. Didn't I climb up to the window? Yes. Regie!" with a frightened move a little closer to the tall soldier, "the dog jumped, and I fell. And then there was old Moll; wasn't it then?"

"I always knew that confounded sneak had more to do with your loss than he would own," cried Rex. "Father, just listen, Madge remembers about the night she left the Wylders'." But it was not until some days after that she could tell them a connected story; just now, the poor child only laid her weary little head against Judge Gray's shoulder, and begged him not to ask — her mind was so confused.

"You shall not be teased with another question," said he, "but I think Rex has a piece of news for you. I promised him he should tell his own story."

"I've kept my promise, Madge, that 's all," said Rex, as the soft eyes turned toward him quickly. "Do you remember what it was? That night before you went to the Asylum I told you that when I was a man I'd try to find your father; and — well! *I've kept my word.*"

"My father?"

Only two words, but the lovely smiling mouth, the touching gratitude of Marjorie's eyes — Rex felt that he had all the thanks he wanted.

"Take her off to your sofa again," said Judge Gray,

releasing her. "But don't tire her — those cheeks are almost as pale as the ones I remember six years ago."

"Tire!" said Marjorie, and then she went contentedly away.

Aunt Debby slipped off, by and by, to get up such a supper as her limited larder would permit for the travellers, leaving Judge Gray to make acquaintance with grandma. As Rex had fancied, his father and Mrs. Frost were delighted with each other. It took the dear old lady back to olden times to see Judge Gray's dress-coat (which he never laid aside for any other fashion), his ruffled shirt and diamond pin — it only needed the knee-breeches and silk stockings to transform him into a gentleman of the old school such as grandma remembered. Quakeress as she was, she dearly loved the old courtly manners, and they were part and parcel of Judge Gray's nature; he could no more have laid them aside than he could have dispensed with his silver curls.

Puck and Posy were fascinated with this, their last acquaintance, and Puck's heart was won by Judge Gray's admiration of Blot. The Judge had both dog and master upon his knee in a twinkling, whereupon ensued the following conversation:

"You're the boy who knows how to keep his promise, are you not?" said Judge Gray.

"Yes," said Puck, modestly, wondering why the merry eyes grew dim suddenly. "Captain Wex said I was a hewo. I don't think it was me; I think it was Blot, 'cause he never cwied, an' I did — awfully!"

"There are two of them, then," said Judge Gray, patting Blot, as that sagacious animal licked his hand affectionately.

"Well, I suppose heroes are something like other boys, Puck. Do you like fifes, and swords, and drums?"

"Dwums?" said Puck, gravely. "Wather think I do! an' I've been wantin' a dwum for more'n a year, now — an' I don't care who gives it to me, either, so I get it!"

The hearty ringing laugh that answered this frank statement reached Aunt Debby's ears out in the kitchen, and she smiled involuntarily at its mirthful sound.

"You shouldn't ought to have said that, me dear," said Posy, looking sober, and bobbing her head very fast at the culprit.

"I only telled the twuth," said Puck, in nowise disconcerted. "Haven't got it in your twunk, have you?"

Judge Gray was obliged to confess that his remark had been made only in a general sense, but added that a drum of the finest description could be found in Philadelphia, and he rather thought that a boy named Puck should have it. And that night, as they were going to bed, Puck confided to Posy that, "It wasn't any wonder Captain Wex was such a gwand Yankee soldier, 'cause you see, he 's got such a *butiful* papa!"

Rex and Marjorie had so much to say to each other that supper was a sad interruption. A conversation which begun with such an exciting announcement as that of having found her father, and continued with little digressions of "O, do you remember?" was not likely to be finished for some days, and Rex did by no means thank Dora for pinning him to a corner for half the evening where he watched Marjorie talking with his father.

It seemed like a dream to Marjorie to hear that her father — the dear father whom she had longed for during her lonely childhood — was not many miles distant; how could she wait and go North before seeing him?

But Judge Gray had a little plan of his own which he wanted to carry out, as he had told Rex. This was nothing more nor less than that the long-parted parent and child should meet at Craignest, whither General Clive expected to go by easy stages, with his brother. The plan had met with Rex's hearty approval; there was a spice of poetic justice in giving the child back to her father inside the walls from whence she had been so cruelly turned away and thrown out upon the wide world.

"Can't you trust yourself to me?" said Judge Gray, as Marjorie prayed to be allowed to go directly to her father. "General Clive is far from well; I do not want you to see him until he can bear the excitement.

"Ill?" cried she in great alarm. "You never told me that."

"He was badly wounded. And, Marjorie, he has given an arm for his country."

Her eyes shone like diamonds. "My dear brave father! He will need both of mine."

"And so, Marjorie dear, you'll try and be as patient as he is, and travel North with us, will you not?"

She gave a dismayed exclamation.

"We were all going the day after to-morrow," said she. "Do you think it would be right to leave them — the children, I mean, and good Aunt Debby?" She spoke louder than she intended, and was overheard.

"What 's that, Daisy — dear me, will I ever remember that that isn't your name, I wonder? Don't you be fretting yourself about that journey; how many years did I take care of those children before you ever saw 'em? Not but that I'd be glad, precious glad, to have your dear little face at my elbow, and your willing hands — bless my stars!" Aunt Debby pulled herself up in her

speech with a sudden start, as a salt drop rolled down the point of her nose, and splashed down on her hand. "I do believe I'm crying! Did you ever see such an old fool?" And here she took refuge behind her handkerchief, and gave two genuine sobs, which made Dora stare with amazement, and brought Marjorie's soft lips on her wrinkled forehead.

"There! that's the end of it," said she, briskly, returning the kiss with several hearty ones. "It isn't often, child, that I take such a fancy to anybody as I've taken to you. What I wanted to say was, that you mustn't think of such a thing as staying here a minute longer. Judge Gray, you just keep that girl from saying another word about it; my mind's made up. It isn't as if we were going to stay down in Virginia. We shall be in Philadelphia (or thereabouts), and we shall see you frequently, Daisy; so you just get ready in the morning and go — and the Lord go with you!" wound up Miss Debby, abruptly, becoming conscious of a rapid moistening of her eyelashes.

"That's right; push her out," said Judge Gray, merrily. He enjoyed Aunt Debby thoroughly, and appreciated the sterling qualities and kindly heart hidden away beneath her terse, sharp sentences, and brusque manner.

Rex growled mentally at the multitude of things which kept Marjorie so busy that he "couldn't speak a word to her," and was by no means amiably disposed toward Dora, who endeavored to take the entertaining of their handsome guest into her own hands. Somehow, Dora had gotten over her dislike for the Yankees in a wonderfully sudden manner.

And so Marjorie bade good-by to the plantation, con-

soling herself by the thought that she should see all of the family again, at the North, and perhaps welcome them at her father's own house. Puck and Posy were inconsolable, and openly lamented their favorite's departure, drawing comparisons between her and Dora which were by no means flattering to the latter, very much to Rex's secret amusement. But it was a very April face that said good-by, notwithstanding all Marjorie's resolutions, and Rex whispered reproachfully in her ear as they rode away, "So you don't want to go, Madge? Perhaps you wish I had never come?"

The indignant glance she gave him, and the shy, pretty blush that followed it a moment later, afforded Captain Rex the most intense satisfaction.

The night before they left Baltimore Marjorie received a letter from Virginia, — her *cousin* Virginia, as she rapturously thought. Such a sweet letter; just like Virginia's dear self: —

"We are off for New York to-night" (wrote Virginia, after telling all her amazement and delight over a letter from Uncle Percy which had given them the strange story of Marjorie's parentage), "and from there on to Craignest, where Uncle George must be, by this time. He passed through here the day before yesterday, and O! he looks ten years younger — notwithstanding the loss of his arm. He never seemed to remember that, Daisy; he was so taken up with the thought of his little daughter. I cried, Daisy — cried like a goose, when I saw him. I can't more than half believe it yet, and I am so sorry that Fred won't be here, with us. He is well, however. I am too busy to fret, and aching to see you, darling little cousin. Phebe sends her love; she has done nothing but

'Bress de Lord' ever since the news came, and she says, (with one of her funny sniffs — you remember?) 'Can't fool *dis* chile, Missy Ginny! Didn't I allers tell you dat li'le missy was a lady born an' bred?' Papa says, 'Tell Daisy to keep a kiss for me' — a dozen, dear, from your own loving *cousin* VIRGINIA."

Marjorie cried over that letter. Her smiles and tears lay very near each other now, and Judge Gray, seeing the April face, was glad when he received the telegram he had been expecting from Percy Clive; and then they started directly for Craignest.

Coming as they did from a southerly direction, their route did not lie through Wynn, but at Saybrooke they found a carriage waiting for them, and with it old Robert.

"Ay, but it's hersel', — the bonnie bairn!" cried he, the instant Marjorie stepped off the platform. "Come back to her ain, just as the auld master meant she should. God bless your bonnie face!"

Judge Gray hurried her into the carriage; he could feel the slight form tremble, and he did not wish to have her upset before she reached her journey's end. So Rex and he talked lively, merry nonsense, and the ride did not seem a long one; indeed, Marjorie, in the gathering darkness, did not see when they turned the gate posts, or know that they were near Craignest until the carriage stopped.

"Here she is," said Judge Gray's happy voice, as he came up the steps. Virginia's arms were around Marjorie's neck, and she was laughing and crying all in a breath, as she bore her on through the hall into the small parlor.

"Don't look so wild, my darling," said she, taking off

her hat, and smoothing her soft, bright hair. "Uncle George isn't here — nobody must look at her or speak to her for just a moment."

But as her eyes grew accustomed to the light, Marjorie arose from her chair, and her face changed rapidly from red to pale, then red again.

"See!" she cried breathlessly, catching hold of Judge Gray. "There is the bird — the queer, gray bird over the door, which I remember; and this is the room where the old man was — the man who pushed me away, and made mamma cry: O! why have you brought me here?"

Virginia gave a startled glance upward at the stuffed eagle who presided with spread wings over the door, but before she could reply, an eager voice said, "*Marjorie!— my child!*"

Marjorie did not see that the several strange figures in the room moved aside to let her pass — she stood chained to the spot as General Clive came down the room. Was *that* her father? that tall, grand-looking man, with his empty coat-sleeve pinned across his broad breast? Her eyes travelled upward until they rested on the pale smiling face, and met the gaze of the loving eyes, and then, with one long-drawn sob of perfect joy, Marjorie's quest was ended as she was clasped to her father's heart.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE RED CROSS KNIGHT'S REWARD.

IT was early May at Craignest. The wild flowers were springing up through the turf, and the birds were singing in the maple boughs, trilling a joyous song for Marjorie, as she sat in the window, her hands folded in her lap, and a quiet, dreamy smile on her sweet lips.

It had been such a happy winter, although passed chiefly at Craignest, varied by one long visit in Philadelphia at Mr. Selden Clive's. What did Marjorie care for the banks of snow outside which sometimes rose nearly to the study windows, when she sat on her father's knee smoothing away the furrows from his handsome face by her playful talk, or sitting by the old-fashioned piano upon which her grandmother (another Marjorie Clive) had played, singing to him in that plaintive voice of her's which he thought the sweetest he had ever heard, save one.

After the first excitement of finding his child was over, General Clive had been seriously ill, and Marjorie had made her uncle Percy's acquaintance at his bedside. Uncle Percy and she were great friends now, and it was he who had added the weight of his persuasions to Marjorie's when the question of General Clive's resigning the army had been started. Marjorie felt that she could never bear the suspense of his absence, were he well enough to attempt active service again, and when she told him so, trying hard to keep back the tears, her father sent for his desk, and playfully ordered her to write his resignation

immediately, lest he should change his mind. How he spoiled her! If the sweet sound nature had had a taint of selfishness in it, Marjorie would have lost her greatest charm, but her father's indulgent fondness only made her more lovely. He would have draped her in silks and velvets, and hung jewels in her little pink ears and around her fair throat if she had cared for the display; but when, one day, he said something of the sort, she only laughed merrily. "You must ask Virginia to teach me how to play *la grande dame*," she said. "Why, papa, you wouldn't know me in anything but my brown merinoes. And what do I want of jewels up here at Craignest? For the snow-birds and you, O, you foolish papa! Would I be any dearer to you in a silk dress — if so, let me have one, by all means."

"You needn't think you will get off that way, miss," said General Clive, pretending to frown at her as she nestled down on his knee, "for I sent *carte blanche* to Virginia last night, and an order of my own to Tiffany. Do you suppose I'm going to introduce you in Philadelphia in a brown merino? No, I'll keep those for my home-bird, my little thrush who has gladdened my heart all winter."

Her heiress-ship was the hardest fact of all for Marjorie to become accustomed to; she made so few demands for money, and her wants were so simple, that General Clive, in great distress, one day delivered over a purse containing a sum which positively frightened her from its liberality, and informed her that the same amount would be ready for her every month. Her face of amazement was so childishly droll, that her father burst out laughing. "My little Lady Simplicity," said he, pinching her cheek, "do you suppose that you are to go

through the world in a poverty-stricken condition? Have you forgotten that you are châtelaine of Craignest, and may turn me out of doors if I dare disobey you?"

"Papa! you don't mean that grandpa" — Marjorie always stumbled over that name — "grandpa left me Craignest, and *all* that money beside?"

"I certainly do," said General Clive, watching the dismayed face, with secret amusement.

"O dear!" sighed she, "what shall I ever do with it? I know," her face brightening; "it ought to have been yours, not mine. I'll ask Judge Gray to make a paper — you needn't laugh, papa; I never had anything to give away before, so I don't know the name of it — a paper giving it to you. It is not fair to make me rich and you" —

"Poor," finished General Clive. "I'm afraid you'll have to support it, my darling. What do you suppose I did out in China? Just because I did not need it (as I bitterly thought, in those days), just because I had no one to lay it up for, wealth poured in upon me. I sha'n't need your fortune, dear, but I'll never forget your offer of it."

So Marjorie was fain to content herself, and managed to make a hole in the contents of her purse by playing Lady Bountiful to all the poor people round about, pleasing old Robert and Mrs. Mackensie by making them her almoners.

But she did shine in Philadelphia, to her proud father's delight, and her shy, graceful manners seemed wonderfully attractive to very many people. The romance of her story, and the gilded charms of General Clive's wealth, were sufficient to make a sensation in the gay

world, and there was no lack of partners or bouquets at the few parties which she attended with Virginia. But somehow, the "stay-at-home" legion were not very attractive to the gentle little heiress, and she used to draw a quiet comparison between some of the be-whiskered, elegant youths around her and a certain tall soldier, who was never handsomer and more manly than in his neat blue uniform — rather to the detriment of the gallant carpet-knights aforesaid.

All through the winter, every week or so, letters came to Craignest, addressed to Marjorie, in a bold hand; letters, with various post-marks, and whose regularity made General Clive smile. She used to read them aloud to her father with such genuine pride in the writer, and such child-like satisfaction because he did not "forget her," that the General was puzzled. But of late he noticed that the last half page was sometimes left unread — to him! so he drew his own conclusions and refrained from even a shadow of teasing.

And now May was here, and there was a sound of rejoicing all over the land, because of that 3d of April when Weitzel's Corps marched into Richmond singing how John Brown's soul went "marching on!" Too soon after came the nation's tears for the Martyr President, over whose sad story Marjorie had wept so bitterly. Even on this May morning there was a tinge of sadness in the smile with which she watched the robins singing in the maples, — a little pathetic thought of the household that was so sad while her own was happy.

"A whole penny for your thoughts, little daughter?" said her father's voice, as he pulled aside the curtain which overhung the window and looked at her.

"They are not worth it, I'm afraid," she said, smiling.

"Letters! O, papa, I didn't know there had been another post since Robert came in."

"Nor has there," said he; "I went myself, on Sultan, and kept you waiting. Read your letters, Marjorie; I have several of my own here."

"A whole bundle," cried Marjorie, surveying her letters delightedly. "One from good Miss Debby, — a fat one, too; this is Virginia's, and that's Judge Gray's handwriting, and O! Regie's letter is post-marked New York!" General Clive's smile was, oddly enough, followed by a little sigh as he watched the shy color come and go in the lovely face.

"Papa! Judge Gray says he has written to ask you to bring me on there for a little visit, and" —

"You don't mean that you want to go?" said her father, mischievously.

"To see Grandma Livingston, and Meta, and Miss Brooks," cried Marjorie. "And you've never seen them yet, you know, papa. And beside (think what good news for dear Judge Gray) Regie has a furlough," and the bright blood which had been tingling in Marjorie's finger-tips rushed into her downcast face and remained there, brilliantly.

"Judge Gray has given us a very cordial invitation," said General Clive, quietly. "I meant to take you there very soon, for I want to thank all those good people who were kind to you when you were a forlorn little child. O, Marjorie," coming close to her, and kissing her with the agitation which the recollection of her lonely childhood always caused him, "can I ever be kind and tender enough to you to obliterate those painful years?"

"Papa, if you say another word like that — what shall I do with you?" demanded Marjorie. "As if this winter were not enough to pay me for everything?"

"Then I shall write to Judge Gray and accept his invitation for next week," said General Clive; "or rather will you, little girl? I don't get along very well with my left hand, or else these willing fingers make me lazy," and he stroked them playfully.

But, to his surprise, the answer was a hesitating "Yes," and upon turning Marjorie's face up to his, he saw that her eyes were full of tears.

"Haven't you finished crying for that arm?" said he, smiling at her, "I have — long ago!"

"It wasn't that, exactly," said Marjorie, faltering a little in her speech. "I only thought — that you should always have the willing fingers to write for you, dear papa."

"Now Madge," said he, unconsciously calling her by Rex's pet name, as he partly divined her thought, "what crochet has got into this absurd little brain? Do you suppose that I expect to keep my daughter to myself all my life? Indeed, I'm not so selfish; I know I shall have plenty of petitions to allow somebody or other to carry you off, but I'll make you one promise" —

"Yes, sir," faltered poor Marjorie, as he paused.

"Look at me, you shy child! There; I'll promise never to send you away until you want to go:" and with a mischievous laugh General Clive went back to his seat.

But Marjorie's cheeks did not grow cool for the rest of the morning.

Miss Debby's letter was full of news, and very characteristic. They were getting used to Germantown, she said, although it seemed cramped to the children to have only a small yard to play in. Grandma was very well and very cheerful.

Dora was flirting with two young men ("silly, both

of 'em," was honest Aunt Debby's comment; "but it pleases her and helps fill up the time, and I shouldn't wonder if it ended in matrimony, even if they are Yankees!").

"But I miss you, child, and always shall," concluded the letter. "When you have spare time just let me hear how you are, and Judge Gray, and the Captain, and your good father. Posy says I must send her letter, which Dora has written at her dictation; it's just the child all over, so I put it in. May the Lord bless you and yours,

"Your affc. friend,

"DEBORAH FROST."

Posy's letter was a curiosity, illustrated as it was with an original drawing done by the little maid herself. Marjorie read it aloud to her father; they had a hearty laugh over it: —

"DEAR MISS DAISY — MARJORIE, — Chloe made some cakes on Saturday, and we had a good Sunday, but it rained and I licked the bowl. I made a mess with my cakes. A black and white pig grunts with short legs. I have a gray hen with little chickens, one all yellow, and Aunt Debby has a new refrigerator. Sometimes I have black nails, they are so dirty. Susie is my new nurse; she is white, but not so pretty as Silvy. The puppy is dead and we all feel very badly. Charley the horse laid on him. Puck is going to look all over for a *white* puppy for me. Blot is black; we do not like two black dogs. Puck sits on the sofa, and when he walks he cannot turn his toes out. He finds it difficult with his "R's" just the same as when you were here. We clean our teeth with chalk and water in a cup with blue stripes.

The pig that grunts.

(Here followed the pig's picture.)

"I send my love to Captain Rex and Judge Gray and your new papa, and you please come down here and bring your old Seraphina. My Seraphina is well. I wear a red sash, me dear.

"Your devoted lover,

"POSY.

"That 's the best letter in your bundle, Marjorie," said General Clive, looking at the pig's portrait, and laughing heartily. "Put me in mind to send Miss Posy a doll next week, and add that your 'new papa' claims the privilege of naming dolly."

General Clive and Marjorie arrived at Judge Gray's early one afternoon the following week. It had been a strange journey to Marjorie: she could not help contrasting it with the time when Mr. Stevens had brought her over the same road. How distinctly she remembered every incident: how afraid she had been of the great, puffing locomotive, and the little girl in the pier-glass. She made her father laugh by telling of it. And when Judge Gray met them at the train and took them straight to his carriage, somebody with a kind, rough face, and big, brown hands stood holding the door open.

"Barney! my dear old Barney!" and Marjorie had her arms around his neck and kissed him before he could say a word.

"An' it 's herself, the darlint," cried the poor fellow, so taken by surprise that he actually sobbed. "Margie, it 's the same warrum heart yees has — to kiss the loikes av me! An' its axin yer parding I'd be, sir," touching his hat to General Clive, "for calling the young lady by the

ould name. It came to me natural; O, but she 's the picture av her own ould self."

"And why shouldn't you call me Margie?" said she. "He was so good to me, papa; he used to wash and dress me sometimes, when Judy was cross. O, I'm ever so glad to see you, Barney; do shake hands with papa."

"I could not persuade him to stay at home and wait until you came," said Judge Gray, as they drove off. "He said he would just go to the cars, 'and if Margie didn't care about speaking to the loikes av him, he'd never trouble her no more.'"

"You knew better than to suppose such a thing," said she, half indignantly. "I'm so glad I met him just as I did, although papa did look rather shocked at me just at first. Dear Barney," and she had much ado to keep back the tears, but the vision of Miss Rachel's cap-strings on the well-remembered steps changed her thoughts just in time, and she ran up and kissed that lady affectionately.

Marjorie was longing to know where Rex was, but some unaccountable feeling tied her tongue, and therefore it was an immense relief to hear Miss Rachel tell her brother that she had a telegram for him from the Captain.

"All right; he'll be here by the next train," said the Judge, running his eye over the dispatch. "I don't know what you'll say to me, Marjorie (Rachel, there, has been lecturing me all the morning), but the fact is I've invited some people here to night."

"I think I can support it," said Marjorie, gayly. "A party? think of that, papa."

"No; only all the family, and your friends here; I could not avoid it, Marjorie. There was every prospect

that the house would be besieged with an army of callers. So I thought the best plan was to let them all come at once and have a good look at you. And, after supper, will it please your small ladyship to dress?"

"If you won't require a ball dress — yes!"

"If you'll believe it, Judge," said General Clive, laughing, "I have the utmost difficulty in inducing that child to appear in anything but brown merinoes" —

"Papa! you ought to keep our quarrels to yourself. Judge Gray, he 's the most fastidious and notional papa that you ever saw."

Miss Rachel smiled; Marjorie, with this strange, lovely color flickering in her cheeks, her quiet eyes dancing with fun, was a new revelation.

By and by Miss Rachel took Marjorie up-stairs; not to her own old room, but into the front chamber, which made the girl feel very old, and guest-like; and there stood Jane courtesying and smiling, very much pleased to see her again.

It was a perfect wonder how Marjorie ever got dressed that evening. If the white dress, with its pale-green trimmings, which made her look fresh and fair as a sea-nymph, was put on gracefully; if the provoking golden hair escaped from its braids and curled up in little rings about her forehead in its most bewitching fashion; if the strings of pearls for her neck and arms were forgotten until the last moment, when she had to dive down to the very bottom of her trunk to find them, — if these details were gone through with mechanical precision and finish, Jane must be thanked, not Marjorie. Her head was in a whirl, and she scolded herself for her silliness as she went down-stairs, resolving to grow cool and composed in the library before submitting herself to her

father's critical eye. But her agitation, whatever caused it, died away utterly as her eyes fell upon Rex, leaning against the mantel, pulling on his white gloves, and it was a very child's face that smiled up at him quietly, as he turned and saw her on the threshold.

"Marjorie!" Rex had thought over all he would say, the arguments he would use, and the humble request he would make, all in excellent and fluent English; but the instant he saw the little vision in white his fine speech flew out of his head, and he made two quick steps toward her, and looking straight down into her liquid gray eyes, said, "Is this my little wife?"

The golden head went down until it rested on the broad shoulder, and two soft arms met around somebody's neck, while the shyest voice imaginable whispered so softly that he had to bend his tall head to catch the murmur, —

"Yes, Regie!"

That was all, for Judge Gray's voice sounded in the hall, and Marjorie, pink and fluttering, disappeared through the drawing-room door.

"Where 's yellow-locks?" said he, mischievously.

"In the drawing-room," said Rex, returning the look with one equally mischievous.

"I thought she'd find you," said Judge Gray, breaking into a merry laugh. "And, pray, what were you saying to her?"

"Thanking her for her midnight ride," said Rex, saucily. "I never had a chance to do so before — properly!"

"Indeed? And what did she say to such culpable neglect on your part?" demanded his father, who had been having a private *tête-à-tête* with General Clive, upon matters of state.

"HER EYES FELL UPON REX."

"Just ask her," cried Rex, flinging his arms around his father's neck, and giving him a regular bear's hug. "I'm the happiest and the luckiest fellow in the United States, and I'm going to tell General Clive so — there 's Aunt Helen, and Lily."

With which discovery Rex was obliged to put his raptures in his pocket, and go and make himself agreeable to his relatives.

They were all there — all our old friends; and as Marjorie stood beside her father and welcomed them, the inconvenient tears were very near her eyes. But Judge Gray kept at her side, saying all manner of merry, quizzical things, and Rex, in his quiet way, warded off all meaning looks and allusions, so her trembling was quieted, and after the first half hour she was able to enjoy it all.

Grandma and Grandpa Livingston were there; how grandma kissed her old favorite, and how pleased she was when Rex came behind her chair, by and by, and whispered a piece of news which made her dear old face beam with delight. There were Mrs. Marston and Lily, both unchanged, but very smiling and gracious, the former lady overwhelming General Clive with compliments upon his daughter's "grace and beauty;" there were all the Maxwells; Clara, with her husband, and Percy, a colonel of artillery; kind Miss Brooks, with her portly figure and smiling face; Mrs. Edmund Livingston, pale, delicate, and lovely as ever, with Meta, our old sunny Meta, at her side, who flung her arms around Marjorie's neck and kissed her so many times that Rex declared he was jealous. And behind all these came Mr. and Mrs. Wylder. How glad Marjorie was to see them; how affectionately she kissed the kind-hearted man who had loved

her so well, and, as she asked for Horace, she again resolved never to tell his father of his cruelty to her. Judge Gray had already done so, but Marjorie did not know it.

They had a most merry evening, and just at the last, as Rex had contrived to seat General Clive in a corner where he made a modest request for his little daughter's hand, who should arrive but Mr. Stevens.

"I got home late from court, my dear Judge," said he, "and found your note on my table, so I had barely time to dress and catch the last train up. I wouldn't have missed it for the world. Miss Marjorie! — you never can be the pale-faced child who jumped at the sight of a locomotive?"

"The very same," said Marjorie, putting her hand in his, "and the happiest little Marjorie you can possibly imagine, sir. Where is papa — O," — with a brilliant accession of tell-tale color, as she saw General Clive making his way toward her on Rex's arm; "this is Mr. Stevens, the gentleman who brought me here."

"Marjorie," said a mischievous whisper at her elbow, as Judge Gray took possession of her. "I was always under the impression that I found a stranger's child that day in the stage-coach: it seems now that I only ran across *one of my own!*"

"Yes," said she, catching his merry tone. "I wonder if any girl ever had two such fathers?" Then, in a touchingly humble voice, "I'm not half good enough for him — Regie, I mean — but — but — he always was the dearest, and bravest, and best" —

"Hear, hear!" cried a laughing voice from the other side of the room. "We're going to have some toasts and speeches, now. Father, you come first; then Mr. Stevens says he'll give us one."

There was no resisting Rex's coaxing face, and Judge Gray took his wine-glass in his hand, and said, as a sudden hush fell on all the company: —

> "'Tis quite unusual at my age
> To speak in public on the stage;'

but if you will have a toast, Rex, I'll give you one. This, then, to the brave young girl who rode twenty miles through a Southern forest, at night, into the rebel camp, to save the life of a Union officer who was suspected of being a notorious spy. She has never yet been thanked as a father's heart would thank her — God bless Marjorie Clive!"

The story had been well-kept, but as the clan of amazed relatives trooped toward the surprised girl, Mr. Stevens whispered laughingly in her ear, "Never mind, my dear; I'll make it even with him for that," and he marched out into the centre of the room.

"Miss Marjorie has not commissioned me to make a speech for her," said he, "but I want to say a few words on my own responsibility. You all know the story which has brought us together to-night, and further comment upon it is unnecessary. I was a passenger in the stage-coach on that December morning when our host found a cold, shivering little child, and I was witness to his tender care of the little waif and stray. Out of the simple kindness, the pure nobility of heart which prompted him to care for the poor orphan, great events have come; he has himself told you that he owes the safety of his only son to that child's bravery and courage. I hope that when all our deeds are proclaimed upon the house-tops we may find one among them which will bear worthy comparison with this act of unobtrusive benevo-

lence, and I am sure that every one of you will join me in drinking the health of 'His Honor, Judge Gray'!"

"Too bad, Stevens!" murmured Judge Gray, as a genuine round of applause followed this speech, and General Clive shook him heartily by the hand.

"Look there," said the soldier, huskily, pointing to where Marjorie stood, on Rex's arm, as handsome a pair of lovers as ever gladdened a father's sight: "there, Judge, is the result of that morning's work — and your best reward!"

And as Judge Gray's eyes followed the gesture, the beautiful old promise came back to him, in the same words which the Hebrew prophet had uttered long ago among the purple hills of Judea, —

"Cast thy bread upon the waters, *and thou shalt find it*, AFTER MANY DAYS!"

THE END.

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